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# STARVED ROCK

EDGAR LEE MASTERS



STARVED ROCK

FRANK LAVINCKAS

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# STARVED ROCK

BY

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Author of "Spoon River Anthology," "Songs and  
Satires," "The Great Valley," "Toward  
the Gulf," etc.

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*Will any reader translate quotation in  
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## STARVED ROCK

As a soul from whom companionships subside  
The meaningless and onswEEPing tide  
Of the river hastening, as it would disown  
Old ways and places, left this stone  
Of sand above the valley, to look down  
Miles of the valley, hamlet, village, town.

\* \* \* \*

It is a head-gear of a chief whose head,  
Down from the implacable brow,  
Waiting is held below  
The waters, feather decked  
With blossoms blue and red,  
With ferns and vines;  
Hiding beneath the waters, head erect,  
His savage eyes and treacherous designs.

\* \* \* \*

It is a musing memory and memorial  
Of geologic ages  
Before the floods began to fall;  
The cenotaph of sorrows, pilgrimages  
Of Marquette and LaSalle.  
The eagles and the Indians left it here  
In solitude, blown clean

## STARVED ROCK

Of kindred things: as an oak whose leaves are sere  
Fly over the valley when the winds are keen,  
And nestle where the earth receives  
Another generation of exhausted leaves.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fatigued with age its sleepless eyes look over  
Fenced fields of corn and wheat,  
Barley and clover.  
The lowered pulses of the river beat  
Invisibly by shores that stray  
In progress and retreat  
Past Utica and Ottawa,  
And past the meadow where the Illini  
Shouted and danced under the autumn moon,  
When toddlers and papooses gave a cry,  
And dogs were barking for the boon  
Of the hunter home again to clamorous tents  
Smoking beneath the evening's copper sky.  
Later the remnant of the Illini  
Climbed up this Rock, to die  
Of hunger, thirst, or down its sheer ascents  
Rushed on the spears of Pottawatomies,  
And found the peace  
Where thirst and hunger are unknown.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is the tragic and the fateful stone  
Le Rocher or Starved Rock,  
A symbol and a paradigm,  
A sphinx of elegy and battle hymn,

## STARVED ROCK

Whose lips unlock  
Life's secret, which is vanishment, defeat,  
In epic dirges for the races  
That pass and leave no traces  
Before new generations driven in the blast  
Of Time and Nature blowing round its head.  
Renewing in the Present what the Past  
Knew wholly, or in part, so to repeat  
Warfare, extermination, old things dead  
But brought to life again  
In Life's immortal pain.

\* \* \* \*

What Destinies confer,  
And laughing mock  
LaSalle, his dreamings stir  
To wander here, depart  
The fortress of Creve Coeur,  
Of broken heart,  
For this fort of Starved Rock?  
After the heart is broken then the cliff  
Where vultures flock;  
And where below its steeps the savage skiff  
Cuts with a pitiless knife the rope let down  
For water. From the earth this Indian town  
Vanished and on this Rock the Illini  
Thirsting, their buckets taken with the knife,  
Lay down to die.

\* \* \* \*

## STARVED ROCK

This is the land where every generation  
Lets down its buckets for the water of Life.  
We are the children and the epigone  
Of the Illini, the vanished nation.  
And this starved scarp of stone  
Is now the emblem of our tribulation,  
The inverted cup of our insatiable thirst,  
The Illini by fate accursed,  
This land lost to the Pottawatomies,  
They lost the land to us,  
Who baffled and idolatrous,  
And thirsting, spurred by hope  
Kneel upon aching knees,  
And with our eager hands draw up the bucketless rope.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is the tragic, the symbolic face,  
Le Rocher or Starved Rock,  
Round which the eternal turtles drink and swim  
And serpents green and strange,  
As race comes after race,  
War after war.  
This is the sphinx whose Memnon lips breathe dirges  
To empire's wayward star,  
And over the race's restless urges,  
Whose lips unlock  
Life's secret which is vanishment and change.

## HYMN TO THE DEAD

O, you who have gone from the ways of cities,  
From the peopled places, the streets of strife,  
From offices, markets, rooms, retreats,  
Pastoral ways, hamlets, everywhere from the earth,  
And have made of the emptiness of your departure  
A land, a country, a realm all your own,  
Set above the hills of our vision, an empire  
Within, around, above our empire of days,  
Of pain and clamorous tongues;  
An empire which out of a sovereign silence  
Stretches its power over the restless multitude  
Of our thoughts, and the ceaseless music of our beings,  
And surrounds us even as the air we breathe —  
O ye majestic Dead, hear our hymn!

\* \* \* \* \*

The clown, the wastrel and the fool in life  
Are lifted up by you, O Death!  
The least of these who has entered in  
Your realm, O Death,  
Is greater than the greatest of us,  
And by a transfiguration has been clothed  
With the glory and the wonder of nature.  
He has drunk of the purple cup of apotheosis,  
And passed through the mystical change,



## STARVED ROCK

And accomplished the cycle of being.  
He has risen from the lowlands of earth  
Into the air on wings of breath.  
He has rejected the shell of the body, feet and hands,  
He has become one with the majesty of Time,  
And taken the kingdom of triumph  
Whether it be cessation or bliss.  
For he has entered into the kingdom of primal powers,  
Being or ceasing to be,  
Even as he has re-entered the womb of nature.  
Or he has found peace,  
States of wisdom, or vision —  
Hail! realm of Silence,  
Whence comes the unheard symphony too deep for  
strings,  
Hail, infinite Light,  
Darkness to eyes of flesh —  
All hail!

\* \* \* \* \*

What are we, the living, beside you the dead?  
We of daily hunger, daily food, daily ablutions,  
The daily rising and lying down,  
Waking and sleep;  
The daily care of the body's needs;  
And daily desire to pass the gift of life;  
And daily fears of the morrow to come;  
And daily pains for things that are gone;  
And daily longing for things that fly us;  
And sorrow that follows wherever we go;

## HYMN TO THE DEAD

And love that mocks us, and peace that breaks,  
And shame that tracks us, and want that gnaws.  
But O ye Dead! Ye great ones,  
Triumphant over these, released  
From the duties of dust, all chains of desire,  
And made inhabitants of breathless spaces,  
Immanent in a realm of calm,  
Rulers of a sphere of tideless air,  
Victors returned from the war of death in life,  
Victors over death in death!

\* \* \* \* \*

For the growing soul turns in  
Even as the seed turns in on itself,  
And becomes hard, transparent,  
An encased life, condensed  
In the process of saving itself  
From rains that beat in the fall,  
And frosts that descend from skies grown cold.  
And we who shed away old thoughts and hopes,  
Days and dreams of life  
Turn in, grow clear like grains of rice,  
Until the realm of death  
Is as snow delivered land  
Luring the seed —  
And it becomes our home, our country,  
Our native land that calls us back  
From this sojourn of adventure,  
And place of profit;  
For O ye majestic Dead, your absence draws us,

## STARVED ROCK

If it be naught but absence still you summon,  
Your absence has become a very Presence,  
A Power, a hierarchy of Life!

\* \* \* \* \*

Even as leaves enrich the earth  
Layer on layer,  
Even as bodies of men enrich the soil  
Generation on generation,  
So do the spirits of those departed  
Enrich our soil of life  
With delights, wisdoms, purest hopes,  
And shapes of beauty.  
But oh beyond all these, is our life enriched  
With exalted contemplations  
Of you, O glorious Dead,  
Who have eaten of the tree of life and become gods,  
Friendly divinities to us who remain,  
Dear familiars, as you were with us  
Fathers, children, lovers, friends.  
Ye who sense with the inner eye,  
Since nothing in our days of living  
Moves uncolored of your splendors,  
Presences to which all things relate!

\* \* \* \* \*

O realm of the Dead,  
Black Mountain, if you be,  
Which darkens heaven,  
And shadows earth,  
Round which our spirits flutter

## HYMN TO THE DEAD

Like startled moths.  
Black mountain with whose blackness  
The light of life is mixed,  
Whereof all hues are made:  
All thoughts, all lofty wanderings of the soul,  
All meanings, divinations  
Of briefest hours, and frailest joys,  
All wonders of the spectrum of the soul  
Out of life and death!

\* \* \* \* \*

Realm of the Dead! Supreme Reality  
All Hail!

## CREATION

Passion flower unfolding in darkness!  
Glow-worm under a spray of lilac!  
Flame on the altar of love!  
Beloved in your chamber!  
The phoenix moon rising from the ashes of day  
Spreads her wings of saffron fire  
Above the enchanted garden.  
And I brush away the leaves of night  
To find the star of my love.  
I part the curtains about the altar,  
I enter your chamber, beloved.

\* \* \* \*

I have entered your chamber, beloved,  
I have found my star.  
Between kisses and whispers  
And the silken touch of flesh  
Breast to breast, lips to lips,  
Our souls are seeking and drifting!  
As an albatross hovers and flies  
With the running sea . . .  
Powers of body, powers of spirit,  
Divinities  
Awakened never before,  
Hidden in nerves asleep, in veins without a tide

## CREATION

Flow through us.  
I give you my life, beloved,  
For life of you, given to me —  
O bride of love!

\* \* \* \* \*

O hair of fire! O breasts of light,  
Like double stars!  
O voice like a lute that whispers  
At midnight, in a bower of roses!  
O body luminous as the nebulous waste  
Across the midnight,  
Pour on my breast, my hands, my brow  
The sacred fire,  
As our flesh becomes one  
Upborne by your breasts,  
White as bridal blossoms  
Where there is yet no milk,  
But only eddying blood  
Circling in whirlpools of delirious ecstasy  
In time with the blood of me.  
Our lips together, our bodies together  
While the yearning urn of porphyry  
Waits to drink the silver stream,  
And thirsts to drink,  
And poises like a gold fish waiting  
For the stream of silver fire. . . .

But oh, hands of me that clasp your sunny head,  
Drawing it close to my breast,

## STARVED ROCK

In rapture of its beauty!  
O temple of your spirit!  
Spirit of you which I woo and would win,  
In rapture without will,  
In rapture blind, save for the inspired urge,  
In rapture seeking further rapture,  
In rapture to wed your spirit fully,  
And all your spirit, which my spirit  
Through the unity of flesh would reach  
And win, and keep —  
Bride of lightning!  
Bride of Life!

\* \* \* \* \*

As when the butterfly slowly moves his wings  
Drawing from the virgin core of honeysuckles  
The sweetest drop of dew: —  
So pause his wings spread wide  
When all is gained.

\* \* \* \* \*

Goddess of the white dawn,  
Let my beloved sleep —  
Robins that sing at dawn,  
Wake not my beloved!  
I sleep with my beloved,  
And she sleeps with me,  
And a life sleeps now  
That will wake!

## THE WORLD'S DESIRE

At Philae, in the temple of Isis,  
The fruitful and terrible goddess,  
Under a running panel of the sacred ibis,  
Is pictured the dead body of Osiris  
Waiting the resurrection morn.  
And a priest is pouring water blue as iris  
Out of a pitcher on the stalk of corn  
That from the body of the god is growing,  
Before the rising tides of the Nile are flowing.  
And over the pictured body is this inscription  
In the temple of Isis, the Egyptian:  
This is the nameless one, whom Isis decrees  
Not to be named, the god of life and yearning,  
Osiris of the mysteries,  
Who springs from the waters ever returning.

At the gate of the Lord's house,  
Ezekiel, the prophet, beheld the abomination of Babylon:  
Women with sorrow on their brows  
In lamentation, weeping  
For the bereavement of Ishtar and for Tammuz sleeping,  
And for the summer gone.  
Tammuz has passed below  
To the house of darkness and woe,



## STARVED ROCK

Where dust lies on the bolt and on the floor  
Behind the winter's iron door;  
And Ishtar has followed him,  
Leaving the meadows gray, the orchards dim  
With driving rain and mist,  
And winds that mourn.  
Ishtar has vanished, and all life has ceased;  
No flower blossoms and no child is born.

But not as Mary Magdalen came to the tomb,  
The women in the gardens of Adonis,  
Crying, "The winter sun is yet upon us,"  
Planted in baskets seeds of various bloom,  
Which sprouted like frail hopes, then wilted down  
For the baskets' shallow soil.  
Then for a beauty dead, a futile toil,  
For leaves that withered, yellow and brown,  
From the gardens of Adonis into the sea,  
They cast the baskets of their hope away:  
A ritual of the things that cease to be,  
Brief loveliness and swift decay.

And O ye holy women, who at Delphi  
Roused from sleep the cradled Dionysius,  
Who with an April eye  
Looked up at them,  
Before the adorable god, the infant Jesus,  
Was found at Bethlehem!

For at Bethlehem the groaning world's desire  
For spring, that burned from Egypt up to Tyre,

## THE WORLD'S DESIRE

And from Tyre to Athens beheld an epiphany of fire:  
The flesh fade flower-like while the soul kept breath  
Beyond the body's death,  
Even as nature which revives;  
In consummation of the faith  
That Tammuz, the Soul, survives,  
And is not sacrificed  
In the darkness where the dust  
Lies on the bolt and on the floor,  
And passes not behind the iron door  
Save it be followed by the lover Christ,  
The Ishtar of the faithful trust,  
Who knocks and says: "This soul, which winter knew  
In life, in death at last,  
Finds spring through me, and waters fresh and blue.  
For lo, the winter is past;  
The rain is over and gone.  
I open! It is dawn!"

## TYRANNOSAURUS: OR BURNING LETTERS

Trees of the forest ground to pulp,  
Rolled into sheets and rabbit tracked  
With nut-gall or with nigrosine —  
Then look at spirits thrill, or gulp  
A lost delight, a rising spleen  
For love that grew intense or slacked . . .

Here are the letters, torn in bits,  
Crammed in the basket, look how full!  
Our little fireplace scarce admits  
So much that once was beautiful.  
Here where we sat and dreamed together  
In March, and now when we should be  
Friends in the glory of June weather,  
We tear our letters up — oh, me!  
Call Jane to take the basket down,  
And throw these on the furnace fire.  
Let ashes drift about the town  
Of what was our desire!

What are we to the gods, I wonder?  
Perhaps two crickets in the grass,  
Who meet and drop their stomachs' plunder  
To touch antennæ as they pass.

## TYRANNOSAURUS

So kissing in such soul communion  
The gardener's step is heard, and quick  
The crickets break their spirits' union,  
Hide under logs or bits of brick.  
Does guilty conscience stir the crickets?  
What does he care? Why not a snap.  
He's trimming out the hazel thickets  
For a tennis court and shooting trap. . . .  
You are afraid of God! Not that?  
Some step has frightened you, I know.  
Well, then it's gossip the alley-cat.  
At least our hands grow cold as snow,  
Relax their touch, and then we come,  
Tear up the letters, sit and stare  
Some moments, wholly dumb!

If we are crickets, still our breasts  
Contain for us things real enough.  
The gods may laugh, their interests  
Are what? I wonder — not the love  
Such as we knew. To be a god  
Through love is what I hoped, and rise  
Above the level of the clod.  
They said it can't be, who are wise,  
That's not the way to win the prize:  
Or if it be, I don't know how;  
Or you are not the one with whom  
I might have won it. Well, my brow  
Is turned into a whitened tomb  
With all uncleanness in it; dreams

## STARVED ROCK

Rotting away with hopes as fair . . .  
To me, the liver, nothing seems  
Won that is lost. I can't invert,  
Sophisticate the facts, or swear  
My evil good. A hurt's a hurt,  
A loss a loss, a scar a scar,  
A spirit frustrate is inert.  
To stretch your hands toward a star  
And lose the star, or have it die  
To ashes like a rocket, alters  
The aspect of your being's sky.  
You've learned no praise from earthly psalters  
Can win the star, or else you've learned  
The star you touched was quickly turned  
To ashes while it burned.

Hell! Let us face it. Here it is  
We had some walks, some precious talks,  
Some hours of paradise and bliss.  
Our blossom opened, we inhaled  
All of its fragrance, now I scowl  
Because our wonder blossom paled  
For lack of water in the bowl  
Tipped over by the alley-cat,  
Or what not, change, distrust or fear;  
Your pride, your will, a hovering gnat  
I struck at striking you, a blear  
Of eyes a moment, making blind  
My vision, yours. . . . Or there's the age,  
The age is frightful to my mind,

## TYRANNOSAURUS

Nothing to do but stand it — well  
I sit here and say “hell.”

For it's really hell to have a will,  
It's hell to hope and to believe,  
That good can swallow up the ill,  
That gods are working, will achieve.  
They may be, yet they disregard  
Our cricket feelings, so we shrill  
Sonnets and elegies round the yard . . .  
Let's talk a bit of chlorophyll:  
The sun was useless for our life,  
No wine, no beef, no watercress  
Until this chlorophyll grew rife  
Millions of years since, more or less.  
And if no wine or beef, no love,  
No pulp, no paper, nigrosine,  
No letters which are made thereof.  
Think! All we found and lost has been  
Through chlorophyll.

And just suppose  
Nature should lose the secret power  
For making chlorophyll, the rose  
We cherished would not come to flower.  
No other man and woman more  
Would burn their letters grieving — yet  
We may be rising, for who knows  
There may be something vastly better  
Than love to flame and flay and fret,

## STARVED ROCK

And hate this letter and that letter,  
Once rid of chlorophyll, in case  
A subtler substance could be given  
To this poor globe out of heaven —  
We are a weak, if growing race!

Here, then, I think is a moral for us,  
Another is tyrannosaurus —  
Tyrannosaurus, what of him,  
The monarch of this world one time,  
Back in the æons wet and dim?  
He faded like a pantomime.  
And he could, well, step over trees,  
Crunch up bowlders like cracking nuts,  
Flip horses away like bumble-bees,  
Stretch out in valleys as if they were ruts;  
And hide a man in his nostril's hole,  
And crush young forestry just like weeds.  
He came and went, and what's your soul,  
And what is mine with their crying needs?  
And love that seemed eternal once,  
Given of God to lift, inspire,  
Well — now do we see? Was I dunce  
Drunk with the wine of soul's desire?  
Who made that wine, why did I drink it?  
Why did I want it? What's the game?  
Are spirits chaos? I scarce can think it.  
Why fly for the light and get the flame?  
Is love for souls of us chlorophyll  
That makes us eatable, sweet and crisp

## TYRANNOSAURUS

For Gods that raise us to feed their fill?  
Who lives, the dreamer, the will o' the wisp?  
Do Gods live, vanish, return again?  
Who in the devil has love or luck?  
One thing is true, there's rapture and pain.  
As for the rest, I pass the buck.  
Something occurs, and God knows what,  
Tyrannosaurus fades like a ghost.  
That throws a light on our little lot,  
Love that is won, love that is lost.  
Even a hundred years from now,  
If this poor earth is rolling still,  
Hearts will quiver, break or bow —  
Provided the plants have chlorophyll.

Oh well! Oh hell! We must be heroic,  
And it helps to scan a million of years.  
And to think of monstrous beasts mesoic,  
Brightens, though it dries no tears.  
I'll dream for life of our walks by the river —  
That was March and it's now July.  
And this remains: I'll love you forever —  
Burn up the letters now — Good by!



## LORD BYRON TO DOCTOR POLIDORI

No more of searching, Doctor — let it go.  
It can't be lost. I have a memory  
I put it in a drawer, or again  
I seem to see me tuck it in a pocket  
Of some portmanteau. If you find the letter  
Deliver it to Moore. But if it's lost,  
The story is not lost. I tell you this  
To save the story from my side. Attend!  
It was this way:

Allegra had become  
A child requiring care, and nutritive  
Instruction in religion, morals, well,  
They call me blasphemers and sensualists,  
But read my poems. Christianity  
Was never of rejected things with me.  
The Decalogue is good enough, I think.  
And Shelley's theories, atheist speculations  
I never shared — nor social dreams. The scheme  
Of having all things, women, too, in common  
Means common women. I have sinned, I know —  
I call it sin. The marriage vow I honor,  
And woman's virtue. Though I stray, I hold  
That women should be chaste, though man is not.  
That's why I placed Allegra in a convent. . . .

## LORD BYRON TO DOCTOR POLIDORI

Now to the letter, and my story of it.

The mother, Claire, Claire Claremont, as you know —  
Pined for Allegra; would possess the child  
And take her from the convent — where? No doubt  
To Shelley's nest, where William Godwin's daughter  
Raised on free love, and Shelley preaching it,  
And Claire in whom 'tis bred, hold sway, who read,  
Talk, argue, dream of freedom, all the things  
Opposed to what is in the present order.  
You know the notes to "Queen Mab." Well, I say  
This suits me not.

So Shelley and his wife,  
Mary, the planet of an hour, since quenched,  
Conceive I keep Allegra where she is  
From wounded pride, or pique. Hell fire! They think  
I'm hurt for thinking Claire and Shelley join  
Their lips in love, and masque my jealousy  
By just this pose of morals, make reprisal  
Under a lying flag, and keep Allegra  
To punish Claire and sate my jealousy  
By this hypocrisy — It makes me laugh.

But to pursue. A maid who was discharged  
From Shelley's household told the credible tale  
That Claire was Shelley's mistress, and the Hoppners  
Heard and believed — why not? As she is fair,  
And Shelley wrote "Love is like understanding  
Which brighter grows gazing on many truths,

## STARVED ROCK

Increases by division," that himself  
Could not accept the code, a man should choose  
One woman and leave all the rest, why not?  
As for myself, I have not preached this doctrine,  
Though living it as men do in the world. . . .

Oh yes, I know this love called spiritual,  
Of which old maids, whose milk has gone to brain  
And curdled in the process, and who hate me  
For taking men and women as they are,  
Talk to create belief for self and others.

Denial makes philosophies, religions.  
Indulgence leaves one sane, objectifies  
The eternal womanly, freeing brain of fumes,  
To work with master hands with love and life.

The story rose, however.

Then comes Shelley  
Bearing a letter from his wife, denying  
That Claire and Shelley loved, you understand —  
By the flesh. Sweet, was it not? Naïve!  
This letter I should hand the Hoppners, who  
Believed the story, and who held a place  
Persuasive touching poor Allegra. Well,  
So Shelley comes and makes the point, the child  
Is in ill health, Claire, too, in a decline,  
And hands this letter to me for the Hoppners.

## LORD BYRON TO DOCTOR POLIDORI

And I've misplaced it. Frankly, from the first,  
Had no fixed purpose to deliver it.  
What principle makes me collaborator  
With such fantastic business? To resume:  
He acted like the boy he was. I smiled —  
Against the flaming rage that burned his face —  
My mocking smile, he thought, the Don Juan  
Upcurved my lips. I read his very thought  
Between words spoken; words that he suppressed:  
It was that I was glad that Claire was ill  
Because of that male mood when love of man  
Finds sustenance where suffering lays low  
The object of desire: If she suffers,  
The man subdues, devours her. She escapes  
If free of love. Oh yes, and this he thought:  
That I was glad she suffered, since my glory  
Had failed to hold her, failed to satisfy  
Her noble heart! God's wounds! Why Shelley thought  
She turned to him and with his spirit found  
A purity of peace and sweetest friendship,  
And faith that saves and serves, as men and women  
Are to each other souls to serve and save!  
Poor fool! I read it all, or pieced it out  
With words that I picked up from time to time. . . .

There was this further thing: I am a man,  
So say they, who accepts the dying creed  
That woman's love is lawless and a toy  
When given if no priest has sanctified it —  
Not quite, perhaps. The point is further on.

## STARVED ROCK

In any case 'tis this: that this belief,  
Mine or part mine, and coloring my acts,  
Shadowed no whit the brow of Lady Claire.  
And that I, greatest lover of my time,  
Had won this lady's body but to lose  
The lady's soul, a soul that slipped and fled  
Out of the hands that clasped her flesh, because  
She knew me through her gift, thought less of me,  
And no wise felt herself bound to my life  
Because she gave her body. Kept her mind,  
Soul, free, untouched by that gift, by the gift  
Was cognizant of what is false and poor —  
(I use some words I heard) in me. And thus  
I lost her soul, though earlier I had gained  
What seemed all to me, all I had the genius  
To comprehend in woman! Then comes Shelley  
And finds her soul, the genuine prize, and I  
Grow sullen with a consciousness of vision  
Inferior to his. All this they thought.  
Oh Jesus, what a lie!

I have loved Nature, love her now: and woman  
Is Nature, and my love for nature means  
Inclusion of the sex. I have not soared  
To heights that sickened me and made me laugh  
At what I sought — or turned from it. No moons  
Behind the clouds; no terrors and no symbols,  
No Emilia Viviani's have I had.  
I know, believe me, love for woman calls

## LORD BYRON TO DOCTOR POLIDORI

A man's soul up to heights too rare to live in.  
I have not risen, therefore, will not rise  
Where thinking stops, because the blood leaves brain  
Therefore have had no falls, and no recoils  
Chasing the Plato vision, the star, the wonder,  
The beauty and the terror, harmony  
Of nature's art; the passion that would make  
The loved one of the self-same womb with me,  
A sister, spouse or angel, dæmon, pilot  
Of life and fate.

How much of truth is here?

Dreams seen most vividly by Petrarch, Dante,  
Who loved without achievement, balking nature,  
Till Passion, like an involute, pressed in  
Harder and harder on its starving leaves,  
Becomes a fragrance — sublimate of self  
Sucked out of sorrow's earth, at last becomes  
A meditative madness. All is written  
Fairly across my page. "She walks in beauty:"  
"When we two parted," "Could love like a river,"  
"Bright be the place of thy soul." Lines, lines  
In "Harold," "Don Juan." Yes, I have loved,  
But saw how far love lures, how far to venture,  
Knowing what can and what cannot be made  
Of the mystery, the wonder, therefore never  
Have had to laugh at self; find Viviani  
A housemaid shelling corn — not threading pearls.

## STARVED ROCK

Or sit, with idiot eyes, my bones half broken,  
Icarus bumped amid a field of stones.

I know the hour of farewell. I have said it  
When my heart trembled, stopped as when a horse  
Braces its terrored feet to keep from plunging  
Over the precipice. Farewell! Farewell!  
I know to say, and turn, and pass my way.

Why! For that matter, even now behold!  
Do I feel less than Shelley would in this?  
I leave the Countess for the war in Greece.  
What's done is done. What's lived is lived. Come,  
Doctor,  
Let's practice with the pistols. Mother of God,  
What is this thing called Life?

## THE FOLDING MIRROR

A folding mirror! What may it be?  
Nothing? Or something? Let me see!  
Its silver chain is hung to the sky  
On a planet nail. And it fronts my eye.  
No stars reflect themselves at first,  
The mirrors are dustless, vacant and clean.  
Not even my face shows — am I cursed?  
What may the mirrors mean?

\* \* \* \* \*

I watch like a cat that waits to mangle  
A breathless rat in an alley nook.  
And a little figure steps into the angle  
Made by the folding mirrors. Look!  
His thin legs wobble, bend and dangle  
Like radish roots. He takes the crook  
Out of his arms and raises them up,  
As if in panic, or supplication.  
He bends and peers, whines like a pup,  
Walks to and fro in his desperation,  
Pinches his arms and beats his breast;  
Runs quivering fingers between his hair,  
Wavers for weariness, sighs for rest,  
Looks up to the planet that seems to bear  
The silver chain like a brad in the wall.



## STARVED ROCK

Upsprings, searches the mirrors again;  
Sees for the first the prodigal  
Waste of stars in the black inane.  
Stamps with his feet upon the void  
He stands on, paces on, why, he wonders  
Is he upborned like an asteroid?  
Hark! The limitless blackness thunders:  
The Infinite growls, he whirls and shivers,  
Runs to cover the mirrors to climb.  
They yield like the waters of phantom rivers.  
He acts like a soul new born that quivers  
Before the mirrors of Space and Time.

\* \* \* \*

Now what's to do? He must fill in.  
This emptiness with horror is shod.  
When did this pageant of things begin?  
Somewhere hiding there is a God.  
Some one drove that planet nail  
Into the blue wall; some one hung  
The silver chain. And what is the tale  
Of the mirrors here in the blackness swung?  
The soul is naked, weak and alone,  
And sees its nakedness in the glass.  
It must create from wood and stone,  
Wire and reeds, color and brass.  
It must create though it be but a mime,  
Make a reality all its own  
Before the mirror of white called Time,  
Before the mirror of blue called Space.

## THE FOLDING MIRROR

Clasp the vastness between their folds,  
Find laws, raise altars, dream of a face —  
Make that real which the hope beholds.

\* \* \* \*

Our terrified manikin commences,  
Fattens his littleness with clothes.  
With crowns and miters puffs his senses,  
Crushes the grape to drown his woes.  
Fills full the mirrors with faces. Now  
They are dancing before them, age and youth,  
Laurels or thorns are bound on a brow.  
They hunt and slay for a thing called Truth.  
Dig for treasure, toil for riches,  
Struggle for place — it is well enough!  
Some lift their busts into chosen niches.  
All are hungry for peace and love.  
And only a few are blind, dispute  
The thing is a dream. If there be worth  
It lies in the strings of the lyre or lute,  
Sounds that never return to earth;  
Dreams to seeing eyes reflected,  
Caught from infinite realms afar.  
How could they be seen, or recollected  
Except for the Real — except for a Star?

\* \* \* \*

God in the blackness, whirlwind, lightning,  
God in the blinding fire of the sun  
Before these empty mirrors brightening  
See what we do, what we have done!

## STARVED ROCK

Out of an astral substance molding  
Music and laws for our hearts' control,  
Yes, and a hope that the mirrors' folding  
Lets slip through a growing soul.  
Are you not proud of us, do you not pity?  
Is all the glory thine alone?  
Then if it be, you must take the city  
Builded, demolished stone from stone.  
All of our madness, weariness, error,  
Blindness, weakness, pain and loss,  
Fumbling feebly before the mirror,  
Yours is the crown, but yours the cross!  
Yours is the juice of grape or poppies  
To fill the void with a make believe;  
Yours the hope where never a prop is,  
The opiates, too, that dull, deceive,  
No less than nature that lifts eternal  
Vision of Life to quiet the heart:  
Verse and color that stamp the infernal  
Dragon of Fear with the feet of Art.  
Yours and ours the consolations  
In loneliness and in terror wrought  
Out of our spirits' desolations,  
Out of our spirits' love and thought!

## A WOMAN OF FORTY

Eyes that have long looked on the world,  
Taken and stored the soul of outward things,  
Dread to look on themselves,  
In the mirror to gaze upon their mirrorings!

There to behold what time has done, what thought  
Has changed their look and light.  
I have lost my face through sorrow and dreams  
And dare not find it, lest it smite

This self to-day, since I may not restore  
My old self who in gladness without terror  
Beheld and knew myself  
Each morning in the mirror!

In the long quest of love I may have found  
A spirit after whom my passion lusted.  
But I had trust not giving love,  
I have given love to hearts I have not trusted.

One thing has come that I would never see,  
Hidden or trembling in my eyes:  
Love in the mirror shown fatigued and mild,  
Hopeless and wise.

## WILD BIRDS

The wild birds among the reeds  
Cry, exult and stretch their wings.  
Out of the sky they drift  
And sink to the water's rushes.  
But the wild birds beat their wings and cry  
To the newcomer out of the sky!

Is he a stranger, this wild bird out of the sky?  
Or do they cry to him because of remembered places  
And remembered days  
Spent together  
In the north-land, or the south-land?

Is this the ecstasy of renewal,  
Or the ecstasy of beginning?  
For the wild bird touches his bill  
Against a mate;  
He brushes her wing with his wing;  
He quivers with delight  
For the cool sky of blue,  
And the touch of her wing!

The wild birds fly up from the reeds of the water,  
Some for the south,

## WILD BIRDS

Some for the north.  
They are gone —  
Lost in the sky!

In what water do these mates of a morning  
Exult on the morrow?  
What wild birds will cry to them as they sink  
Out of an unknown sky?  
To whose cry will she quiver  
Through her burnished wings to-morrow,  
In the north-land,  
In the south-land,  
Far away?

## A LADY

She sleeps beneath a canopy of carnation silk,  
Embroidered with Venetian lace,  
Between linens that crush in the hand  
Soft as down.

Waking, she looks through a window  
Curtained with carnation silk,  
Embroidered with Venetian lace,  
The walls are hung with velvet  
Embossed with a *fleur de lis*,  
And around her is the silence of richness,  
Where foot-falls are like exhalations  
From carpets of moss.

Little clocks tinkle.

Medallions priceless as jewels  
Lie by jars suspiring like coals of fire.  
And a maid prepares the bath,  
Tincturing delicious water with exquisite essences.  
And she is served with coffee  
In cups as thin as petals,  
Sitting amid pillows that breathe  
The souls of freesia!

All things are hers:  
Fishes from all seas,

## A LADY

Fruits from all climes.  
The city lies at her command,  
And is summoned by buttons  
Which are pressed for her.  
Noiselessly feet move on many floors,  
Serving her.  
Wheels that turn under coaches  
Of crystal and ebony,  
And yachts dreaming in strange waters,  
And wings — all are hers!  
And she is free:  
Her husband comes and goes  
From his suite below hers.  
She never sees him,  
Nor knows his ways, nor his days.

But she is very weary  
And all alone amid her servants,  
And guests that come and go.  
Her lips are red,  
Her skin is soft and smooth —  
But the page blurs before her eyes.  
Her eyelids are languid,  
And droop from weariness,  
Though she will not rest  
From the long pursuit of love!  
Her hair is white;  
The skin of her faultless neck  
Edges in creases



## STARVED ROCK

As she turns her perfect head.  
And the days dawn and die.  
What day that dawns will bring her love?  
And day by day she waits for the dawn  
Of a new life, a great love!

But every morning brings its remembrance  
Of the increasing years that are gone.  
And every evening brings its fear  
Of death which must come,  
Until her nerves are shaken  
Like a woman's hair in the wind —  
What must be done?  
Some one tells her that God is love.  
And when the fears come  
She says to self over and over,  
"God is love! God is love!  
All is well."  
And she wins a little oblivion,  
Through saying "God is love,"  
From the truth in her heart which cries:  
"Love is life,  
Love is a lover,  
And love is God!"

She is a flower  
Which the spring has nourished,  
And the summer exhausted.  
Fall is at hand.  
Weird zephyrs stir her leaves and blossoms;

## A LADY

And she says to herself, " It is not fall,  
For God is love! "

My poor flower!  
May this therapy ease you into sleep,  
And the folding of jewelless hands!  
You are beginning to be sick  
Of the incurable disease of age,  
And the weariness of futile flesh!

## THE NEGRO WARD

Scarce had I written: it were best  
To crush this love, to give you up,  
Drink at one draught the bitter cup,  
And kill this new life in my breast,  
Than Parker's breathing seemed to give  
Ominous sound the end was near.  
I did so want this man to live —  
This negro soldier, dear.

'Twas three in the morning, all was still  
But Parker's rattle in the throat,  
Outside I heard the whippoorwill.  
The new moon like an Indian boat  
Hung just above the darkened grove,  
Where you and I had pledged our love,  
When you were here. Such precious hours,  
Such fleeting moments then were ours . . .  
Alone here in the silent ward,  
With Parker dying, I was scared.  
His breath came short, his lips were blue.  
I asked him: "Is there something more,  
Parker, that I can do for you?"  
"Please hold my hand," he said. Before  
I took it, it was growing cold —  
Death, how quick it comes!

## THE NEGRO WARD

Then next I seemed to hear the drums —  
For I had fainted for his eyes  
That stared with such a wide surprise,  
As the lids fell apart they stared,  
As if they saw what to behold  
Had startled his poor soul which fared  
Where it would not. I heard the drums,  
The bugle next, lay there so faint  
With Parker's eyes still in my view,  
Like bubble motes which flit and paint  
Themselves upon the heaven's blue.  
An orderly had mailed meanwhile  
That letter, to you, there I lay  
Too weak to write again, unsay  
What I had written.

Down the aisle,  
Between our beds a step I heard,  
A voice: "Our order's here, we leave  
In half an hour for France." I stirred  
Like a dead thing, could scarce conceive  
What tragedy was come. No chance  
To write you or to telegraph.  
In twelve hours more, as in a trance  
I looked from Ellis Island, where  
My chums could gayly talk and laugh.  
In two hours more we sailed for France.  
All this was hard, but still to bear  
The knowledge of you, your despair,

## STARVED ROCK

Or change, or bitterness, if you thought  
That letter came from me, was wrought  
Out of a heart that could not stake  
Its own blood for your sake.

I will come back to you at length  
If I but live and have the strength.  
How will you like me with hair white,  
And wasted cheeks, deep lined and pale?  
It all began that dreadful night  
Of Parker's death, the strain and fright,  
The letter it seemed best to write —  
From then to now I have been frail.  
Our ship just missed a submarine,  
And here the hardships, gas-gangrene,  
The horrors and the deaths have stripped  
My life of everything. Is it to prove  
For duty, you, though bloody-lipped,  
And fallen my unconquerable love  
For country and for you through all,  
Whatever fate befall?

What is my soul's great anguish for?  
For what this tragedy of war?  
For what the fate that says to us:  
Part hands and be magnanimous?  
For what the judgment which decrees  
The mother love in me to cease?  
For separation, hopeless miles  
Of land and water us between?

## THE NEGRO WARD

For what the devil force that smiles  
At man's immedicable pain?

I have not lost my faith in God.  
Life has grown dark, I only say:  
Dear God, my feet have lost the way.  
Religion, wisdom do not give  
A place to stand, a space to live.  
I have not lost my faith in love,  
That somehow it must rise above  
The clouds of earth, I still can rest  
In dreams sometimes upon your breast.  
But, oh, it seems sometimes a play  
Where gods are picking a bouquet:  
The blossom of war, my soul or yours  
More fragrant grown as it endures... .

## WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE

Homer saw nations, armies, multitudes —  
You saw them in the intimate interludes  
Of Brutus' soul at midnight in a tent  
When the infection festers the event.  
Ulysses' course is changed by the sea's trough.  
You saw an epoch when a hat blows off.  
Orestes fled the Furies, won his peace  
Through Apollo in old Greece.  
But who unbars the mouse traps of your world,  
Or kills the ambushed serpent where it's curled?  
Your Fates return, and Fortinbras draws in  
On Hamlet's impotence and Gertrude's sin.  
All oceans in a raindrop, drops of dew  
Containing perfect heavens starred and blue;  
Angels who mother Calibans, and hopes  
Are of your vision — great mosaics hued  
With thoughts of princes, poets, misanthropes,  
Reveal their minute colors closer viewed.  
Atomies, maggots, worms or gilded flies,  
Nothing too small or foul is for your eyes.  
You made a culture of dreams lost or won  
Like Robert Browning, Emily Dickinson.  
You looked in heaven when the lightning shone,  
Then saw a fairy's whip of cricket bone.  
For gods and men bacteriologist

## WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE

Of spiritual microbes hidden which subsist  
In moments of red joy — calm satirist  
Of worlds forsaken for a woman's hair,  
Kings slain, states crumbled, heroes false or fair,  
The madness of the flesh, love on the wrack,  
A white maid married to a soldier black.  
Incests, adulteries and secret sins,  
The fall of monarchs and of manikins.  
All men at last a rattling empty pod,  
All men destroyed like flies for sport of God.  
All Life at last an idiot's furious tale —  
You had the strength to say this and not quail!  
For you what were the unities, the rules  
Of Plautus, Corneille or the Grecian schools?  
Flame through a pipe will sing, perhaps, when blown  
Against the craftsman's silver, but the tone  
Of worlds in conflagration, that's to be  
The sacred fire with wings outspread and free,  
Wherein an Athens falls, a Sidon stands,  
And where a freezing clown may warm his hands.

If you could empty out a tiger's brain  
And wire up its spinal cord again  
To Sappho's brain, it would no doubt devour  
The tiger's nerves and sinews in an hour.  
Such muscles and such bones could not endure  
The avid hunger of a fire so pure.  
And you, Will Shakspeare, spirit sensitive,  
You lived past fifty, that is long to live  
And feed a flame like yours, and let the flame



## STARVED ROCK

Remake itself and lap at flesh and frame.  
I say with Jesus, wisdom's eyes are blind  
To seek a poet out and think to find  
A slender reed that's shaken by the wind.  
Come cyclops of the counter, millionaires,  
Lawyers and statesmen in the world's affairs,  
And thin away like flesh which acid eats  
Under the passion even of John Keats.  
But if you felt and saw love, agony,  
As Shakspeare knew them you would quickly die.  
There is no tragedy like the gift of song,  
It keeps you mortal but demands you strong;  
It gives you God's eyes blurred with human tears,  
And crowns a thousand lives in fifty years.  
Enter the breathless silence where God dwells,  
See and record all heavens and all hells!

## FOR A PLAY

Love began with both of them so gently  
Meeting, neither thought nor looked intently.  
Afterward her breath invoked the fire —  
Breath to breath set burning their desire.

Is there aught in flesh or is it spirit  
Conscious of its kindred soul when near it?  
Woe to flesh or soul that's wholly wakened  
While the other's soul-depths lie unshakened!

How could she give him all sacred blisses,  
Long embraces, in the darkness kisses,  
If she was not his, all else forgetting,  
Lovers gone and other loves' regretting?

That was just the place her gold was leadened —  
Flesh there too alive, to him all deadened.  
She could harp not to his playing wholly,  
Yet his heart strings trembled for her solely.

So this love play hastened to the curtain.  
Each one spoke his lines in accents certain,  
While at times behind the wings her glances  
Warmed the prompter's treasonous advances.

## STARVED ROCK

Is there greater martyrdom than this is?  
You have staked your soul where the abyss is.  
You have given all — oh sorry barter  
You have lit the fire for you the martyr.

You will still love on, or turn to hating,  
Days depart, your heart stays in its waiting,  
Where's the blame? She gave her heart's half measure,  
All she had, for all your soul's full treasure.

What's the half to keep, could you achieve it?  
What your treasure if you could retrieve it?  
Never more shall you again bestow it . . .  
Now you have a song if you're a poet.

Now you're ever dumb if song's denied you,  
You shall be more dumb than all beside you,  
While your soul is shaken by its torrents —  
Dante songless in a Dante Florence.

Age shall not make strong, nor deeper learning.  
Grief grows clearer with your eye's discerning.  
Pass the years, but oh the soil grows faster —  
Richer for the roots of your disaster.

Ends the play — for what is life but dying?  
What is love but fire forever crying?  
What your soul but love's pure carbon fuel?  
Love and life make ashes of the jewel!

## CHICAGO

### I

On the gray paper of this mist and fog  
With dust for the erasure and with smoke  
For drawing crayons, be this charcoal scrawl:  
The breed of Gog in the kingdom of Magog,  
Skyscrapers, helmeted, stand sentinel  
Amid the obscuring fumes of coal and coke,  
Raised by enchantment out of the sand and bog.  
This sky-line, the Sierras of the lake,  
Cuts with dulled teeth,  
Which twist and break,  
The imponderable and drifting steam.  
And restlessly beneath  
This man-created mountain chain,  
Like the flow of a prairie river  
Endlessly by day and night, forever  
Along the boulevards pedestrians stream  
In a shuffle like dancers to a low refrain:  
Forever by day and night  
Pursuing as of old the lure of delight,  
And the ghosts of pleasure or pain.  
Their rhythmic feet sound like the falling of rain,  
Or the hush of the waves, when the roar  
Is blown by a wind off shore.

## STARVED ROCK

### II

From a tower like a mountain promontory  
The cesspool of a railroad lies to view  
Fouling the marble of the city's glory:  
A crapulous sluice of garbage and of cars  
Where engines rush and whistle, smudge the blue  
With filth like the trail of slugs.  
It is a trench of steel which bars  
Free access to the common shore, and hugs  
In a coil of lazar arms the boulevard.  
Cattle and hogs delivered here for slaughter  
Corrupt the loveliness of the water front.  
They low and grunt,  
Switched back and forth within the tangled yard.  
But from this tower the amethystine water,  
The water of jade or slate,  
Is visible with its importunate  
Gestures against the sky to still retreats  
In Michigan, of quiet woods and hills  
Beyond the simmering passion of these streets,  
And all their endless ills. . . .

### III

But over the switch yard stands the Institute  
Guarded by lions on the avenue,  
Colossal lions standing for attack;  
Between whose feet luminous and resolute  
Children of the city passing through

## CHICAGO

To palettes, compasses, the demoniac  
Spirit of the city shall subdue.  
Lions are in the loop and jackals too.  
They have no trainers but the alderman,  
Who uses them to hunt with, but in time  
The city shall behold its nobler plan  
Achieved by hands that rhyme,  
Workers who architect and build,  
And out of thought its substance re-arrange,  
Till all its prophecies shall be fulfilled.  
Through numbers, science and art  
The city shall know change,  
And win dominion over water and light,  
The cyclop's mastery of the mart;  
The devils overcome,  
Which stalk the squalid ways by night  
Of poverty and the slum,  
Where the crook is spawned, the burglar and the bum.  
These youths who pass the lions shall assuage  
The city's thirst and hunger,  
And save it from the wastage and the wage  
Of the demagogue, the precinct monger.

### IV

This is the city of great doges hidden  
In guarded offices and country places.  
The city strives against the things forbidden  
By the doges, on whose faces  
The city at large never looks;

## STARVED ROCK

Doges who could accomplish if they would  
In a month the city's beauty and good.  
Yet this city in a hundred years has risen  
Out of a haunt of foxes, wolves and rooks,  
And breaks asunder now the bars of the prison  
Of dead days and dying. It has spread  
For many a rood its boundaries, like the sprawled  
And fallen Hephaestos, and has tenanted  
Its neighborhoods increasing and unwall'd  
With peoples from all lands.  
From Milwaukee Avenue to the populous mills  
Of South Chicago, from the Sheridan Drive  
Through forests where the water smiles  
To Harlem for miles and miles.  
It reaches out its hands,  
Powerful and alive  
With dreams to touch tomorrow, which it wills  
To dawn and which shall dawn. . . .  
And like lights that twinkle through the stench  
And putrid mist of abattoirs,  
Great souls are here, separate and withdrawn,  
Companionless, whom darkness cannot quench.  
Seeing they are the chrysalis which must feed  
Upon its own thoughts and the life to be,  
Its flight among the stars.  
Beauty is here, like half protected flowers,  
Blooms and will cast its multiplying seed,  
Until one mass of color shall succeed  
The shaley places of these arid hours.

## CHICAGO

v

Chicago! by this inland sea  
In the land of Lincoln, in the state  
Of souls who held the nation's fate,  
City both old and young, I consecrate  
Your future years to truth and liberty.  
Be this the record frail and incomplete  
Of one who saw you, mingled with the masses  
Along these magical mountain passes  
With restless yet with hopeful feet.  
Could they return to see you who have slept  
These fifty years, who laid your first foundations!  
And oh! could we behold you who have kept  
Their promises for you, when new generations  
Shall walk this boulevard made fair  
In chiseled marble, looking at the lake  
Of clearer water under a bluer air.  
We who shall sleep then nor awake,  
Have left the labor to you and the care  
Ask great fulfillment, for ourselves a prayer!



## THE WEDDING FEAST

Said the chief of the marriage feast to the groom,  
    Whence is this blood of the vine?  
Men serve at first the best, he said,  
    And at the last, poor wine.

Said the chief of the marriage feast to the groom,  
    When the guests have drunk their fill  
They drink whatever wine you serve,  
    Nor know the good from the ill.

How have you kept the good till now  
    When our hearts nor care nor see?  
Said the chief of the marriage feast to the groom,  
    Whence may this good wine be?

Said the chief of the marriage feast, this wine  
    Is the best of all by far.  
Said the groom, there stand six jars without  
    And the wine fills up each jar.

Said the chief of the marriage feast, we lacked  
    Wine for the wedding feast.  
How comes it now one jar of wine  
    To six jars is increased?

## THE WEDDING FEAST

Who makes our cup to overflow?

And who has the wedding blest?

Said the groom to the chief of the feast, a stranger

Is here as a wedding guest.

Said the groom to the chief of the wedding feast,

Moses by power divine

Smote water at Meribah from the rock,

But this man makes us wine.

Said the groom to the chief of the wedding feast,

Elisha by power divine

Made oil for the widow to sell for bread,

But this man, wedding wine.

He changed the use of the jars, he said,

From an outward rite and sign:

Where water stood for the washing of feet,

For heart's delight there's wine.

So then 'tis he, said the chief of the feast,

Who the wedding feast has blest?

Said the groom to the chief of the feast, the stranger

Is the merriest wedding guest.

He laughs and jests with the wedding guests,

He drinks with the happy bride.

Said the chief of the wedding feast to the groom,

Go bring him to my side.

## STARVED ROCK

Jesus of Nazareth came up,  
And his body was fair and slim.  
Jesus of Nazareth came up,  
And his mother came with him.

Jesus of Nazareth stands with the dancers  
And his mother by him stands.  
The bride kneels down to Jesus of Nazareth  
And kisses his rosy hands.

The bridegroom kneels to Jesus of Nazareth  
And Jesus blesses the twain.  
I go a way, said Jesus of Nazareth,  
Of darkness, sorrow and pain.

After the wedding feast is labor,  
Suffering, sickness, death,  
And so I make you wine for the wedding,  
Said Jesus of Nazareth.

My heart is with you, said Jesus of Nazareth,  
As the grape is one with the vine.  
Your bliss is mine, said Jesus of Nazareth,  
And so I make you wine.

Youth and love I bless, said Jesus,  
Song and the cup that cheers.  
The rosy hands of Jesus of Nazareth  
Are wet with the young bride's tears.

## THE WEDDING FEAST

Love one another, said Jesus of Nazareth,  
Ere cometh the evil of years.  
The rosy hands of Jesus of Nazareth  
Are wet with the bridegroom's tears.

Jesus of Nazareth goes with his mother,  
The dancers are dancing again.  
There's a woman who pauses without to listen,  
'Tis Mary Magdalen.

Forth to the street a Scribe from the wedding  
Goes with a Sadducee.  
Said the Scribe, this shows how loose a fellow  
Can come out of Galilee!

## BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

By the waters of Babylon by the sea,  
On the sand where the waters died,  
The sea wind and the tide  
Drowned the words you spoke to me.

The sea fell at our feet. The sand  
Hushed the whispering waters, near  
The babble of boats by the pier  
Was the ictus to the roar on the strand.

By the waters of Babylon a grief to be,  
The waiting ships in the bay,  
Awed the words we would say  
Against the sound of the sea:

For France was below the waters, and the west  
Behind me where the rains  
Come in November on the window panes,  
And the blast shakes the ruined nest

Under the dripping eaves. What then remains  
But memory of the waters of Babylon,  
And the ships like swan after swan,  
Under the drone of angry hydroplanes?

## BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

By the waters of Babylon we did not weep,  
Though love comes and is gone,  
As the wind is, as waters drawn  
In spray from the deep.

Neither for things foreseen and ominous,  
For newer hands that somewhere wait  
To thrill afresh, the reblossomed fate  
Did we surrender dolorous. . . .

Change now is yours beyond the waters, nights  
Of waiting and of doubt have dimmed desire.  
Our hands are calm before the dying fire  
Of lost delights.

Babylon by the sea knows us no more.  
Between the surge's hushes  
When on the sand the water rushes  
There is no voice of ours upon the shore.

## THE DREAM OF TASSO

O Earth that walls these prison bars — O Stones  
Which shut my body in — could I be free  
If these fell and the grated door which groans  
For every back scourged hither oped for me?  
Freedom were what to travel you, O Earth,  
When my heart makes its daily agony?  
And longing such as mine cannot ungirth  
Its bands and its mortality o'erleap.  
Our life is love unsatisfied from birth,  
Our life is longing waking or asleep,  
And mine has been a vigil of quick pain.  
O Leonora, thus it is I keep  
Grief in my heart and weariness of brain.

How did I know these chains and bars are wrought  
Of frailer stuff than space, that I could gain  
In earth no respite, but a vision brought  
The truth, O Leonora? It was this:  
I dreamed this hopeless love, so long distraught  
Was never caged, but from the first was bliss,  
And moved like music from the meeting hour  
To the rapt moment of the earliest kiss  
Bestowed upon your hands, to gathering flower  
Of lips so purely yielded, the embrace  
Tender as dawn in April when a shower

## THE DREAM OF TASSO

Quenches with gentleness each flowering place;  
So were your tears of gladness — so my hands  
Which stroked your golden hair, your sunny face,  
Even as flying clouds o'er mountain lands  
Caress with fleeting love the morning sun.

Now I was with you, and by your commands.  
Your love was mine at last completely won,  
And waited but the blossom. How you sang,  
Laughed, ran about your palace rooms and none  
Closed doors against me, desks and closets sprang  
To my touch open, all your secrets lay  
Revealed to me in gladness — and this pang  
Which I had borne in bitterness day by day  
Was gone, nor could I bring it back, or think  
How it had been, or why — this heart so gay  
In sudden sunshine could no longer link  
Itself with what it was.

Look! Every room  
Had blooms your hands had gathered white and pink,  
And drained from precious vases their perfume.  
And fruits were heaped for me in golden bowls,  
And tapestries from many an Asian loom  
Were hung for me, and our united souls  
Shone over treasure books — how glad you were  
To listen to my epic, from the scrolls  
Of Jerusalem, the holy sepulcher.  
Still as a shaft of light you sat and heard  
With veiled eyes which tears could scarcely blur,



## STARVED ROCK

But flowed upon your cheek with every word.  
And your hand reached for mine — you did not speak,  
But let your silence tell how you were stirred  
By love for me and wonder! What to seek  
In earth and heaven more? Heaven at last  
Was mine on earth, and for a sacred week  
This heaven all of heaven.

So it passed  
This week with you — you served me ancient wine.  
We sat across a table where you cast  
A cloth of chikku, or we went to dine  
There in the stately room of heavy plate.  
Or tiring of the rooms, the day's decline  
Beheld us by the river to await  
The evening planet, where in elfin mood  
You whistled like the robin to its mate,  
And won its answering call. Then through the wood  
We wandered back in silence hand in hand,  
And reached the sacred portal with our blood  
Running so swift no ripples stirred the sand  
To figures of reflection.

Once again  
Within your room of books, upon the stand  
The reading lights are brought to us, and then  
You read to me from Plato, and my heart  
Breathes like a bird at rest; the world of men,  
Strife, hate, are all forgotten in this art  
Of life made perfect. Or when weariness

## THE DREAM OF TASSO

Comes over us, you dim the lamp and start  
The blue light back of Dante's bust to bless  
Our twilight with its beauty.

So the time  
Passes too quickly — our poor souls possess  
Beauty and love a moment — and our rhyme  
Which captures it, creates the illusion love  
Has permanence, when even at its prime  
Decay has taken it from the light above,  
Or darkness underneath.

I must recur  
To our first sleep and all the bliss thereof.  
How did you first come to me, how confer  
On me your beauty? That first night it was  
The blue light back of Dante, but a blur  
Of golden light our spirits, when you pass  
Your hand across my brow, our souls go out  
To meet each other, leave as wilted grass  
Our emptied bodies. Then we grow devout,  
And kneel and pray together for the gift  
Of love from heaven, and to banish doubt  
Of change or faithlessness. Then with a swift  
Arising from the prayer you disappear.  
I sleep meanwhile, you come again and lift  
My head against your bosom, bringing near  
A purple robe for me, and say, "Wear this,  
And to your chamber go." And thus I hear,  
And leave you; on my couch, where calm for bliss

## STARVED ROCK

I wait for you and listen, hear your feet  
Whisper their secret to the tapestries  
Of your ecstatic coming — O my sweet!  
I touched your silken gown, where underneath  
Your glowing flesh was dreaming, made complete  
My rapture by upgathering, quick of breath,  
Your golden ringlets loosened — and at last  
Hold you in love's embrace — would it were Death! . . .  
For soon 'twixt love and sleep the night was past,  
And dawn cob-webbed the chamber. Then I heard  
One faintest note and all was still — the vast  
Spherule of heaven was pecked at by a bird  
As it were to break the sky's shell, let the light  
Of morning flood the fragments scattered, stirred  
By breezes of the dawn with passing night.  
We woke together, heard together, thrilled  
With speechless rapture! Were your spirit's plight  
As mine is with this vision, had I willed  
To torture you with absence? Would I save  
Your spirit if its anguish could be stilled  
Only among the worms that haunt the grave?

My dream goes on a little: Day by day,  
These seven days we lived together, gave  
Our spirits to each other. With dismay  
You watched my hour's departure. On you crept  
Light shadows after moments sunny, gay.  
But when the hour was come, you sat and wept,  
And said to me: "I hear the rattling clods  
Upon the coffin of our love." You stepped

## THE DREAM OF TASSO

And stood beside the casement, said "A god's  
Sarcophagus this room will be as soon  
As you have gone, and mine shall be the rod's  
Bitterness of memory both night and noon  
Amid the silence of this palace." So  
I spoke and said, "If you would have the boon —  
O Leonora, do I live to know  
This hope too passionate made consummate? —  
Yet if it be I shall return, nor go  
But to return to you, and make our fate  
Bound fast for life." How happy was your smile,  
Your laughter soon,— and then from door to gate  
I passed and left you, to be gone awhile  
Around Ferrara.

In three days, it seemed,  
I came again, and as I walked each mile  
Counting to self — my feet lagged as I dreamed —  
And said ten miles, nine miles, eight miles, at last  
One mile, so many furlongs, then I dreamed  
Your reading lamps were lighted for me, cast  
Their yellow beams upon the mid-night air.  
But oh my heart which stopped and stood aghast  
To see the lamp go out and note the glare  
Of blue light set behind the Dante mask!  
Who wore my robe of purple false and fair?  
Who drank your precious vintage from the flask  
Roman and golden whence I drank so late?  
Who held you in his arms and thus could ask?  
Receive your love? Mother of God! What fate

## STARVED ROCK

Was mine beneath the darkness of that sky,  
There at your door who could not leave or wait,  
And heard the bird of midnight's desolate cry?  
And saw at last the blue light quenched, and saw  
A taper lighted in my chamber — why  
This treachery, Leonora? Why withdraw  
The love you gave, or eviler, lead me here,  
O sorceress, before whom heaven's law  
Breaks and is impotent — whose eyes no tear  
Of penitence shall know, whose spirit fares  
Free, without consequence, as a child could sear  
Its fellow's hands with flame, or unawares,  
Or with premeditation, and then laugh and turn  
Upon its play. For you, light heart, no snares  
Or traps of conscience wait, who thus could spurn  
A love invited.

Thus about your lawn  
I listened till the stars had ceased to burn,  
But when I saw the imminence of the dawn  
And heard our bird cry, I could stand no more,  
My heart broke and I fled and wandered on  
Down through the valley by the river's shore.  
For when the bird cried, did you wake with him?  
Did you two gaze as we had gazed before  
Upon that blissful morning? I was dim  
Of thought and spirit, by the river lay  
Watching the swallows over the water skim,  
And plucking leaves from weeds to turn or stay  
The madness of my life's futility,

## THE DREAM OF TASSO

Grown blank as that terrific dawn — till day  
Flooded upon me, noon came, what should be?  
Where should I go? What prison chains could rest  
So heavily on the spirit, as that free,  
But vast and ruined world?

O arrowed breast  
Of me, your Tasso! And you came and drew  
The arrows out which kept the blood repressed,  
And let my wounds the freer bleed: 'Twas you  
By afternoon who walked upon an arm  
More lordly than mine is. You stopped nor knew,  
I saw him take your body lithe and warm  
Close to his breast, yes, even where we had stood  
Upon our day, embraced — feed on the charm  
Of widened eyes and swiftly coursing blood.  
I watched you walk away and disappear  
In the deep verdure of the river wood,  
Too faint to rise and fly, crushed by the fear  
Of madness, sudden death!

This was my dream,  
From which I woke and saw again the sheer  
Walls of my prison, which no longer seem  
The agony they did, even though the cell  
Is the hard penalty and the cursed extreme  
Hate in return for love. But oh you hell,  
You boundless earth to wander in and brood —  
Great prison house of grief in which to dwell,  
Remembering love forgotten, pride subdued,

## STARVED ROCK

And love desired and found and lost again.  
That is the prison which no fortitude  
Can suffer, and the never dying pain  
From which the spacious luring of the earth  
Tempts flight for spirit freedom, but in vain!

Ah Leonora! Even from our birth  
We build our prisons! What are walls like these  
Beside the walls of memory, or the dearth  
Of hope in all this life, the agonies  
Of spiritual chains and gloom? I suffer less,  
Imprisoned thus, than if the memories  
Of love bestowed and love betrayed should press  
Round my unresting steps. And I send up  
To heaven thanks that spared that bitterness,  
That garden of the soul's reluctant cup!

## THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

He hears his father pray when he's a boy:  
" Jesus we know, the Savior, and we ask,  
In Thy great plenitude of mercy, grace,  
Forgiveness for our waywardness; we invoke  
Thy blessing, and may righteousness and peace  
Prevail in all the earth. Meekly we rest  
Upon the precious promise of Thy word.  
Gather us home with Thine own people, Lord,  
And all the glory shall be Thine."

So much

To show the father's prayer which he heard.  
The father is a saint, a quietist,  
Save that he has his hatreds, strong enough:  
Turns face of stone and silence to the men  
Whose ways of life are laid in sin, he thinks  
And calls them dirty dogs and scalawags,  
Because they vote a ticket he dislikes,  
Or love a game of cards, a glass of beer,  
Or go to see the County Fair, where once  
A drunken bus-man drives upon a boy  
And kills him. Then the saint is all aflame,  
And tries to have the fair put out for good.



## STARVED ROCK

And so the son, who will become at last  
The Christian Statesman, hears his father pray,  
And prays himself, and takes the lesson in  
Of godliness, the Bible as the source  
Of truth infallible, divine.

This boy

Is blessed with health, a body without flaw,  
His forehead is a little low, perhaps,  
And has a transverse dent which keeps the brain  
Shaped to the skull; a perfect brain is sphered,  
As perfect things are circles; but a brain  
Something below perfection, which is fed  
By a great body and an obdurate will,  
And sense of moral purpose will go far,  
Farther than better brains in craft of states,  
For some years anyway, if a voice be given  
Which reaches to the largest crowded room,  
To speak the passionate moralities  
Which come into that brain creased straight across  
The forehead with a dent.

He goes to school,

And from the first believes he has a mission  
To make the world a better place, avows  
His mission in the world, bends all his strength  
To make his armor ready: health of body,  
A blameless life, hard studies, practices  
With word and voice.

## THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

It is a country college  
Where he matriculates — the father wished it;  
A college where the boys are mostly poor,  
And waste no time, have not the cash to buy  
Delight, if they desired.

He ruminates  
Upon the pebbles and Demosthenes,  
And sets his will to be an orator  
That he may herald truth and save the world.  
After much toil, re-writing, he delivers  
A speech he calls, "Ich Dien," and loses out  
Against a youth who speaks on Liberty.  
And then he uses Gladstone for his theme,  
The Christian Statesman; for exordium  
Tells of the ermine which will die before  
It suffers soilure — that was Gladstone — yes!  
But still he cannot win the prize; a boy  
Who talks about the labors of Charles Darwin,  
His suffering and sacrifice, is awarded  
The prize this time — a boy who had the wit  
To speak in praise of Darwin's virtues — saying  
Nothing about his hellish doctrines, thus  
Winning the cautious judges to his theme.

But is our little Gladstone crushed, dismayed?  
He plucks up further strength and takes a hint:  
A larger subject may bring down the prize.  
He thinks of Thomas Jefferson — but then  
Jefferson was a deist, took the Bible

## STARVED ROCK

And cut out everything but Jesus' words.  
"Yet I can speak on what was good in him,  
His work for liberty, the Declaration,  
And close my eyes to all his heterodoxy."  
Then something of this plan crept like a snake  
Into his brain, he petted it with hands:  
Be ye as wise as serpents, and as doves  
Harmless, he smiled — and went to work again,  
And won the prize.

And now he has stepped forth  
Into the world's arena to become  
A Savior, an evangel, as he thinks,  
In truth a pest. He runs for Congress first  
And when his manager takes out a check  
And shows him, given by the local brewery,  
Another check a bank gives, he maintains  
A smiling silence, thinking to himself,  
Jesus accepted gifts from publicans,  
And if I am elected then this money,  
However dirty, will be purified  
By what I do.

But then he was defeated.  
He thinks the banks and breweries did the trick.  
In truth they knew the Christian Statesman, knew  
The oleaginous smile and silver voice  
Concealed the despot. Did he scourge them then?  
Well, scarcely then — he wrote a public letter  
And said the people had decided it.

## THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

And what the people said was law. He nerved  
His purpose for another trial — that body  
So big and flawless could not be exhausted —  
That voice still carried to the farthest corner,  
That oily smile deceived the multitude  
That he was hurt, embittered, only waited  
To see if body, voice and oily smile  
Could win by any means; if not, the scourge  
Would be brought forth, the smile dropped, the complaints  
Against the breweries, what not, opened up,  
Unmasked. For when your hope is gone, you're free  
To scold and tell your bitterness.

And then  
He made a third and last attempt, though edging  
Toward the sophistry that moral questions  
Make those political, and by this means  
Trying to win the churches. Still he stuck  
To matters economic, as before  
Took what the breweries gave to help his cause,  
His campaign fund. By this time many more  
Had found him out, and knew him for a voice  
And tireless body nourishing a brain  
As mediocre as the world contained,  
And only making louder noise because  
Of body strong and voice mellifluous.  
They put him down for good; the Christian Statesman  
Had cause to think he was no statesman, or  
No Christian, or the electorate not Christian.

## STARVED ROCK

And so he took the mask off, dropped the smile,  
And let his mouth set like a concrete crack  
And went about to punish men, while seeming  
To save the world.

Out of that indentation,  
That fosse of mediocrity, came up  
A crocodile with wagging tail upreared,  
And smile toothed to the gullet — it was this:  
Questions political are moral questions,  
And moral questions are political,  
And terms convertible are equipollent,  
And wholly true. Therefore, I rise to preach  
To moral America, draw audiences  
In churches, of the churches. If I win  
Majorities upon — no matter what —  
A law will blossom; as all moral questions  
Are equally political, procure  
For their adoption the majority.  
Upon this fortress I can stand and shoot —  
Who can attack me, since I seek for self  
Nothing, but for my country righteousness?  
And as an instrument of God I punish  
My enemies as well.

Who are my enemies?  
The intelligencia, as they call themselves,  
Who flaunt the Bible wholly or in part,  
Or try to say that Darwin's evolution  
Honors the Deity more than Genesis.

## THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

Who are my enemies? The thinkers, yes,  
The strivers for a higher culture, yes,  
The scorers of old fashioned ways, the things  
Really American! — I know the crowd —  
That smart minority I overwhelm,  
Blot out, drown out, by massing under me  
The great majority, the common folk,  
Believers in the Bible — first for them!  
And on the way the vile saloon I crush,  
The abominable brewery — then I take away  
From banqueters and diners, diners out,  
The seekers after happiness, not God,  
The cocktail and the wine they love so well.  
This is a moral question, being so  
Is also a political — the majority  
Can do what they desire. I am consistent,  
For from the first I've preached the people's rule,  
Abided by the people's voice and taken  
Defeat with grace because the people gave it.  
So now I say the people have the right  
To pass upon all questions. As I said  
When starting as a public man, the people  
Could have what Government they desired, in fact  
A King, or despotism, if they voted for it.  
For all this talk of rights, or realms of right,  
Or individual preferences, beliefs  
And courses in the world is swallowed up  
By right of the majority — the serpent  
Of Moses, so to speak, which swallowed up  
All other serpents.

## STARVED ROCK

If he thought so much  
The Christian Statesman thought this way — at least  
He acted out a part which seemed to say  
He analyzed so far. He went to work  
To make his country just a despotism  
Not governed by a King, but by the people  
Laying the hand of law on everything  
Most intimate and private, having thought  
For moral aspects, as all politics  
Are moral in their essence, to repeat.

Did not the Christian Statesman have revenge  
In building his theocracy, who saw  
All bills of right and fruit of revolution  
Ground into mortar, made into a throne  
For Demos?

And behold King Demos now!  
A slouch hat for a crown upon his brow,  
Stuffed full of bacon and of apple pie,  
The Christian Statesman leaning on his shoulder  
A tableau of familiarity.  
The Christian Statesman having lost his hair  
Betrays the Midas ears — the oily smile  
Beams on the republic he has overthrown!

## THE LAMENT OF SOPHONIA

You who have wasted this June for me,  
Bitter be the seed of your love.

Long midnights by the sea  
Have I waited for your return,  
Counting the stars —  
Bitter be the seed of your love.

And as stars go out in the crocus light of dawn,  
As waters drip from a failing fountain,  
So passed these days of June.  
As a boy strips from a stalk of snap-dragons  
The perfect blossoms,  
And treads them into the earth,  
So you have taken the June days from me —  
Bitter be the seed of your love.

On my couch by the sea,  
My golden curls loosened,  
Resting after the cool ablution of evening waters,  
My body white as whitecaps, under the moon,  
My eyes large as the fox's lurking in darkness,  
I have waited for your return.



## STARVED ROCK

May the scourge of Asia mar your beautiful body,  
Beloved!

You have wasted my loveliest June.

As the unheeding wind

Drives the falling cherry blossoms

Into the purple waves,

So you have scattered my days of June —

Bitter be the seed of your love!

I have distilled henbane for you,

Beloved,

And put it in a crystal vial.

The moon of October will shine,

Then you will come to me,

Your wanderings and treasons finished!

And when you slip exhausted from my arms

I will give you wine from a golden cup,

And pour the henbane in it —

I shall give you henbane for the poison of defeated  
love;

I shall kiss your dead lips, Beloved.

Then I shall drink, too.

Our bodies shall feed the worms

As these June days have fed my writhing sorrow,

Beloved murderer of my June!

## AT DECAPOLIS

### MARK, CHAP. V

#### I

#### THE ACCUSATION

I am a farmer and live  
Two miles from Decapolis.  
Where is the magistrate? Tell me  
Where the magistrate is!

Here I had made provision  
For children and wife,  
And now I have lost my all;  
I am ruined for life.

I, a believer, too,  
In the synagogues.—  
What is the faith to me?  
I have lost my hogs.

Two thousand hogs as fine  
As ever you saw,  
Drowned and choked in the sea—  
I want the law!

They were feeding upon a hill  
When a strolling teacher

## STARVED ROCK

Came by and scared my hogs —  
They say he's a preacher,

And cures the possessed who haunt  
The tombs and bogs.  
All right; but why send devils  
Into my hogs?

They squealed and grunted and ran  
And plunged in the sea.  
And the lunatic laughed who was healed,  
Of the devils free.

Devils or fright, no matter  
A fig or straw.  
Where is the magistrate, tell me —  
I want the law!

## II

### JESUS BEFORE MAGISTRATE AHAZ

Ahaz, there in the seat of judgment, hear,  
If you have wit to understand my plea.  
Swine-devils are too much for swine, that's clear,  
Poor man possessed of such is partly free,

Is neither drowned, destroyed at once, his chains  
May pluck while running, howling through the mire  
And take a little gladness for his pains,  
Some fury for unsatisfied desire.

## AT DECAPOLIS

But hogs go mad at once. All this I knew,—  
But then this lunatic had rights. You grant  
Swine-devils had him in their clutch and drew  
His baffled spirit. How significant,

As they were legion and so named, the point  
Is, life bewildered, torn in greed and wrath.  
Desire puts a spirit out of joint.  
Swine-devils are for swine, who have no path.

But man with many lusts, what is his way,  
Save in confusion, through accustomed rooms?  
He prays for night to come, and for the day  
Amid the miry places and the tombs.

But hogs run to the sea. And there's an end.  
Would I might cast the swinish demons out  
From man forever. Yet the word attend.  
The lesson of the thing what soul can doubt?

What is the loss of hogs, if man be saved?  
What loss of lands and houses, man being free?  
Clothed in his reason sits the man who raved,  
Clean and at peace, your honor. Come and see.

Your honor shakes a frowning head. Not loth,  
Speaking more plainly, deeper truth to draw;  
Do your judicial duty, yet I clothe  
Free souls with courage to transgress the law

## STARVED ROCK

By casting demons out from self, or those  
Like this poor lunatic whom your synagogues  
Would leave to battle singly with his woes —  
What is a man's soul to a drove of hogs?

Which being lost, men play the hypocrite  
And make the owner chief in the affair.  
You banish me for witchcraft. I submit.  
Work of this kind awaits me everywhere.

And into swine where better they belong,  
Casting the swinish devils out of men  
The devils have their place at last, and then  
The man is healed who had them — where's the wrong

Save to the owner? Well, your synagogues  
Make the split hoof and chewing of the cud  
The test of lawful flesh. Not so are hogs.  
This rule has been the statute from the flood.

Ahaz, your judgment has a fatal flaw.  
Is it not so with judges first and last —  
You break the law to specialize the law? —  
This is the devil that from you I cast.

## WINGED VICTORY

Icarus, Daedalus, Medea's dragons,  
Pegasus, Leonardo, Swedenborg,  
Cyrano de Bergerac, with dew-filled flagons,  
Bacon, who schemed with chemicals and forge,  
Lana, of copper spheres of air exhausted,  
Therefore made light to rise  
Up where the pathless ways are frosted  
In the blue vitriol of the skies.

Montgolfier, Franklin, von Zeppelin, Watt,  
Edison, an engine must be, spiral springs,  
Nor steam move not these more than condor wings  
Of heaven's Argonaut,  
Gathering the sun-set clouds for golden fleece.  
Santos Dumont and Langley, over these  
The Americans, the brothers Wright.  
America finds wings for flight.  
At last out of the New World wings are born  
To wheel far up where cold is, and a light  
Dazzling and immaculate,  
In the heights where stands the temple of the Morn.  
Winged Victory more beautiful than Samothrace's  
For the New World opening the gate  
Of heaven at last, where mortals enter in  
Unconquerably and win

## STARVED ROCK

The great escape from earth, the measureless spaces  
Of air across the inimical abyss  
Between ethereal precipice and precipice.  
Hail! spirits of the race's  
Courage to be free, adventurers  
Of infinite desire!  
Hail! seed of the ancient wars,  
Of burning glasses, catapults, Greek fire!  
Hail! final conquerors,  
Out of whose vision greater vision springs —  
America with wings!

The vulture lags behind, the Gorgones,  
Revealed or ambushed in the thunder clouds,  
Would tear from heaven these audacities  
Of deathless spirit, shatter them and spill  
The blasphemy of genius from the sky.  
Gods are you, flyers, whom no danger shrouds,  
No terror shakes the will.  
Gods are you though you suffer and must die,  
Men winged as gods who fly!

Borelli, in the centuries that are gone,  
With feathers made him wings, but steel  
Soars for the petrol demon's toil,  
Fed by the sap of trees far under earth  
In the long eons past turned into oil.  
The petrol demon in the enchanted coil  
Of lightning howls and spins the invisible wheel  
Which had its birth

## WINGED VICTORY

In the rapt vision of Archimides.  
Borelli, in the centuries that are gone,  
With feathers made him wings. But now a swan,  
A steel-borne beetle cleaves the immensities,  
Fed with fire of amber and oil of trees,  
And soars against the sun,  
And over mountains, seas!

Flight more auspicious than the flight of cranes  
In Homer's Troyland, or than eagles flying  
Toward Imaus when the midnight wanes.  
Victorious flight! symbol of man defying  
Low dungeons of the spirit, darkness, chains.  
Flight beyond superstition and the reigns  
Of tyrannies where thought of man should be  
Swift as his thought is free.  
Flight of an era born to-day  
That puts the past and all its dead away.

Locusts of the new Jehovah sent to scourge  
All Pharaohs who enslave.  
Hornets with multiple eyes,  
Scorning surprise,  
And armed to purge  
The despot and the knave  
Out of the fairer land where men shall live,  
Winning all things which were so fugitive  
Of wisdom, happiness and peace,  
Of hope, of spiritual release



## STARVED ROCK

From fear of life, life's mean significance,  
Till life be ordered, not a thing of chance.

The hopelessness of him who cried  
Vanity of Vanities  
Was justified,  
But now no longer must abide.  
Failure was his, and failure filled the hours  
Of our fathers in the past — let it depart.  
Triumph is come, and triumph must be ours.  
The archangels of earth through Israel,  
Through India and Greece  
Shall find us wings for life and for increase  
Of living, and shall battle down the hell  
Whose fires still smolder and profane.  
Life and the human heart  
In living must become the aeroplane,  
Not the yoked oxen and the cart.  
Let but the thought of East and West be blent,  
Europe, America, the Orient,  
To give life wings as Time's last great event:  
The final glory of wings to the soul of man  
In an order of life human, but divine,  
Fashioned in carefulest thought, powerful but of delicate  
design,  
As the wings of the aeroplane are.  
Where spirit of man is used to the full, but saved,  
As the petrol demon, in this dragon of war,  
Uses and saves his power.

## WINGED VICTORY

Where neither thought, truth, love nor gifts, nor any  
flower

Of spirit of man, so mangled or enslaved  
In the eras gone, is wasted or depraved.

Man shall no longer crawl, the curse is raised  
With winning of his wings.

Dust he no more shall eat,  
Who crawls not, but from feet  
Has risen to wings!

Man shall no longer python be.

These wings are prophecies of a world made free!

Man shall no longer crawl, the curse is raised.

He has soared to the gate of heaven and gazed  
Into the meadows of infinity,

Winged and with lightning shod,

Beyond the old day's lowering cloud and murk.

The heavens declare the glory of God,

Man shows His handiwork!

## OH YOU SABBATARIANS!

Oh you sabbatarians, methodists and puritans;  
You bigots, devotees and ranters;  
You formalists, pietists and fanatics,  
Teetotalers and hydropots,  
You thin ascetics, androgynous souls,  
Chaste and epicene spirits,  
Eyes blind to color, ears deaf to sound,  
Fingers insensitive,  
Do what you will,  
Make what laws you choose —  
Yet there are high spaces of rapture  
Which you can never touch,  
They are beyond you and hidden from you.

We leave you to the dull assemblies,  
Charades, cantatas and lectures;  
The civic meetings where you lie and act  
And work up business;  
The teas of forced conversation,  
And receptions of how-de-dos,  
And stereotyped smiles;  
The church sociables;  
And the calls your young men of clammy hands  
And fetid breath  
Pay to anæmic virgins —

## OH YOU SABBATARIANS!

These are yours;

Take them —

But I tell you

In places you know not of,

We, the free spirits, the livers,

Guests at the wedding feast of life,

Drinkers of the wine made by Jesus,

Worshippers of fire and of God,

Who made the grape,

And filled the veins of His legitimate children

With ethereal flame —

We the lovers of life in unknown places

Shall taste of ancient wine,

And put flowers in golden vases,

And open precious books of song,

And look upon dreaming Buddhas,

And marble masks of genius.

We shall hear the sound of stringed instruments,

Voicing the dreams of great spirits.

We shall know the rapture of kisses

And long embraces,

And the sting of folly.

We shall entwine our arms in voluptuous sleep,

And in the misery of your denials

And your cowardice and your fears

You shall not even dream that we exist.

Unintelligible weeds! We, the blossoms of life's garden,

Flourish on the hills of variable winds —

We perish, but you never live.

## PALLAS ATHENE

Athene! Virgin! Goddess! Queen! descend,  
Come to us and befriend.  
Set up your shrine among us and defend  
Our realm against corruptions which impend.

\* \* \* \* \*

Divinity of order and of law,  
Most powerful and wise,  
Our land reclaim.  
Patron of the assemblies of the free,  
Our cities shame!  
Dethrone our bastard Demos, partisans  
Of Moody, Campbell, all the Wesleyans.  
Come down with awe,  
Enceladus and Pallas strike, who rise  
Against your father and his hierarchy.  
Smite the giants Superstition, Force,  
Fanaticism, Ignorance and Faith  
In village gods, and bury them beneath  
Volcanic mountains. Yoke them to the course  
And labor of your wisdom. Fling your shield,  
Medusa faced, before the brows of clay,  
Who rule our clattering day;  
Flash it before their brows and make  
Stones for the pavement of the way

## PALLAS ATHENE

Whereon you drive your chariot, golden-wheeled.  
Descend, O Goddess, for the memory's sake  
And for the hope's sake of your son,  
Franklin, your herald, Washington,  
Who dreamed to make perpetual  
Our Parthenon, column, court and hall.  
And save it from the donjon, minaret,  
The cross, the spire, the vane, the parapet!

\* \* \* \*

We have no god but Jesus,  
No god but Billiken.  
Nature and Dionysius  
Come back again!  
Jehovah is an alien tyrant, rules us  
From arid Palestine,  
Who mouths a heaven that fools us,  
And curses the olive and vine,  
And the smiles of the lyric nine.  
Gods are they, hard and full of wrath  
Who drive us on the unintelligible path.  
Gods are they, and unreckoning of their work  
Too puerile or despotic, or with feet  
That drip blood on a mercy seat.  
They nerve our hands with hatred's dirk,  
Or weaken us with poison sweet.  
Drug us to mumble this is life, who feel  
In our delirium, no less, that life  
Is an ocean that breaks the grist stones and the wheel  
Set up to feed this world of strife

## STARVED ROCK

By Mary's son, Mary the wife —  
Come from the Islands of the Blest,  
Goddess, and give us wisdom, vision, rest.  
Reveal a Beauty for our hearts to love.  
The wooden ark of Moses, overlaid  
With strips of gold,  
And all the spurious covenant thereof:  
By which our life is obelised.  
We would no more behold,  
Who have so vainly with it temporized.  
Fruitless our spirits have these centuries prayed  
Before the Janus cross,  
The oracle that speaks in riddles, asks  
Penitence, obedience, tasks  
Which nature interdicts.  
We are the body on the crucifix,  
Not Jesus; we, the race, are crucified,  
And die upon the cross,  
For centuries have died.  
Come and restore our loss  
Of truth, the eyes of spirits undeceived,  
Courage with nature, strike the opiate joss  
To ruin with your sword,  
O most adored!  
Give us Reality, O lover of men,  
Republics, cities, lands.  
Uplift our eyes to Beauty, once perceived  
We may rebuild the Areopagus,  
With wiser eyes and hands.  
Bring Thought, the Argus, consciousness

## PALLAS ATHENE

That looks before and after,  
And grace perpetual of Mnemosyne —  
Remembering we shall be free!  
Save us, O Goddess, from the drifting crowd,  
Wondering, witless, loud,  
The lovers of the minute who possess  
No reverence and no laughter!

Goddess! with silver helmet, guardian  
You may be, if we worship at your shrine,  
Before the gates of Boston and New York,  
Chicago, San Francisco, through the span  
Of continents and isles; your heart incline  
Toward our turbulent blood from many climes,  
Worships and times.

Lift from our necks the brass and jeweled torque  
Of restless zealots and of idiot mouths;  
The locusts swarm, the land is cursed with drouths,  
Bring rain and dew,  
Plant olive trees,  
Set on our hills the emblem of the vine;  
Bring to our hearts the lofty purities  
Of song and laughter, wisdom, and renew  
Temples of beauty and academies!

Set up your golden altar  
In Parthenons in every village and shire.  
The crucifix and psalter,  
The ikons and the toys of vain desire



## STARVED ROCK

We cast into the fire.  
We keep the lover Jesus, for his hope,  
His humanism and his flaming zeal.  
He will approach your altar, he will kneel  
At last before you, for the horoscope  
Of life misread in youth  
And youthful dreams and faith.  
Goddess! our globe that hungers for the truth  
Between the roar of life, silence of death  
Cannot be stayed or cowed. But, oh, descend  
First to our soil, Atlantis, and befriend.  
Make us a light across the fathomless sea  
Of centuries to be,  
Even as Athens is, divinity!

## AT SAGAMORE HILL

All things proceed as though the stage were set  
For acts arranged. I have not learned the part,  
The day enacts itself. I take the tube,  
Find daylight at Jamaica, know the place  
Through some rehearsal, all the country know  
Which glides along the window, is not seen  
For definite memory. At Oyster Bay  
A taxi stands in readiness; in a trice  
We circle strips of water, slopes of hills,  
Climb where a granite wall supports a hill,  
A mass of blossoms, ripening berries, too,  
And enter at a gate, go up a drive,  
Shadowed by larches, cedars, silver willows.  
This taxi just ahead is in the play,  
Is here in life as I had seen it in  
The crystal of prevision, reaches first  
The porte cochere. This moment from the door  
Comes Roosevelt, and greets the man who leaves  
The taxi just ahead, then waits for me,  
Puts a strong hand that softens into mine,  
And says, O, this is bully!

We go in.

He leaves my antecessor in a room  
Somewhere along the hall, and comes to me

## STARVED ROCK

Who wait him in the roomy library.  
How are those lovely daughters? Oh, by George!  
I thought I might forget their names, I know —  
It's Madeline and Marcia. Yes, you know  
Corinne adores the picture which you sent  
Of Madeline — your boy, too? In the war!  
That's bully — tea is coming — we must talk,  
I have five hundred things to ask you — set  
The tea things on this table, Anna — now,  
Do you take sugar, lemon? O, you smoke!  
I'll give you a cigar.

### The talk begins.

He's dressed in canvas khaki, flannel shirt,  
Laced boots for farming, chopping trees, perhaps;  
A stocky frame, curtains of skin on cheeks  
Drained slightly of their fat; gash in the neck  
Where pus was emptied lately; one eye dim,  
And growing dimmer; almost blind in that.  
And when he walks he rolls a little like  
A man whose youth is fading, like a cart  
That rolls when springs are old. He is a moose,  
Scarred, battered from the hunters, thickets, stones;  
Some finest tips of antlers broken off,  
And eyes where images of ancient things  
Flit back and forth across them, keeping still  
A certain slumberous indifference  
Or wisdom, it may be.

## AT SAGAMORE HILL

But then the talk!  
Bronze dolphins in a fountain cannot spout  
More streams at once: Of course the war, the emperor,  
America in the war, his sons in France,  
The dangers, separation, let them go!  
The fate has been appointed — to our task,  
Live full our lives with duty, go to sleep!  
For I say, he exclaims, the man who fears  
To die should not be born, nor left to live.  
It's Celtic poetry, free verse. He says:  
You nobly celebrate in your Spoon River  
The pioneers, the soldiers of the past,  
Why do you flout our Philippine adventure?  
No difference, Colonel, in the stock, the difference  
Lies in the causes. Well, another stream:  
Mark Hanna, Quay and others, what I hate,  
He says to me, is the Pharisee — I can stand  
All other men. And you will find the men  
So much maligned had gentle qualities,  
And noble dreams. Poor Quay, he loved the Indians,  
Sent for me when he lay there dying, said,  
Look after such a tribe when I am dead.  
I want to crawl upon a sunny rock  
And die there like a wolf. Did he say that,  
Colonel, to you? Yes! and you know, a man  
Who says a thing like that has in his soul  
An orb of light to flash that meaning forth  
Of heroism, nature.

Time goes on,  
The play is staged, must end; my taxi comes

## STARVED ROCK

In half an hour or so. Before it comes,  
Let's walk about the farm and see my corn.  
A fellow on the porch is warming heels  
As we go by. I'll see him when you go,  
The Colonel says.

The rail fence by the corn  
Is good to lean on as we stand and talk  
Of farming, cattle, country life. We turn,  
Sit for some moments in a garden house  
On which a rose vine clammers all in bloom,  
And from this hilly place look at the strips  
Of water from the bay a mile beyond,  
Below some several terraces of hills  
Where firs and pines are growing. This resembles  
A scene in Milton that I've read. He knows,  
Catches the reminiscence, quotes the lines — and then  
Something of country silence, look of grass  
Where the wind stirs it, mystical little breaths  
Coming between the roses; something, too,  
In Vulcan's figure; he is Vulcan, too,  
Deprived his shop, great bellows, hammer, anvil,  
Sitting so quietly beside me, hands  
Spread over knees; something of these evokes  
A pathos, and immediately in key  
With all of this he says: I have achieved  
By labor, concentration, not at all  
By gifts or genius, being commonplace  
In all my faculties.

## AT SAGAMORE HILL

Not all, I say.

One faculty is not, your over-mind,  
Eyed front and back to see all faculties,  
Govern and watch them. If we let you state  
Your case against you, timid born, you say,  
Becoming brave, asthmatic, growing strong:  
No marksman, yet becoming skilled with guns;  
No gift of speech, yet winning golden speech;  
No gift of writing, writing books, no less  
Of our America to thrill and live —  
If, as I say, we let you state your case  
Against you as you do, there yet remains  
This over-mind, and that is what — a gift  
Of genius or of what? By George, he says,  
What are you, a theosophist? I don't know.  
I know some men achieve a single thing,  
Like courage, charity, in this incarnation;  
You have achieved some twenty things. I think  
That this is going some for a man whose gifts  
Are commonplace and nothing else.

We rise

And saunter toward the house — and there's the man  
Still warming heels; my taxi, too, has come.  
We are to meet next Wednesday in New York  
And finish up some subjects — he has thoughts  
How I can help America, if I drop  
This line or that a little, all in all.

\* \* \* \*

## STARVED ROCK

But something happens; I have met a loss;  
Would see no one, and write him I am off.  
And on that Wednesday flashes from the war  
Say Quentin has been killed: we had not met.  
If I had stayed to meet him.

So, good-by  
Upon the lawn at Sagamore was good-by,  
Master of Properties, you stage the scene  
And let us speak and pass into the wings!  
One thing was fitting—dying in your sleep—  
A touch of Nature, Colonel, you who loved  
And were beloved of Nature, felt her hand  
Upon your brow at last to give to you  
A bit of sleep, and after sleep perhaps  
Rest and rejuvenation; you will wake  
To newer labors, fresher victories  
Over those faculties not disciplined  
As you desired them in these sixty years.

TO ROBERT NICHOLS

England has found another voice in you,  
 Of beauty and of truth,  
 True to their soul, as you are true —  
 Singer and soldier, yet a youth.

Out of the trenches and the rage of blood,  
 The hatred and the lies  
 You, like a wounded sky-lark, in a flood  
 Pour forth these melodies,

Of a spirit which has suffered, yet has soared  
 Above the stench of hell and death's defeats.  
 I look at you, as often I have pored  
 On the death mask of Keats.

Or the face of him quickly and gladly going  
 The waves of the sea under,  
 To the land of man's unknowing,  
 Or the land of wonder.

And the war had you! what can it give  
 In return for souls like yours  
 Mangled or blotted but? — who shall forgive  
 The war while time endures?



## STARVED ROCK

Back of the shouting mob, the brazen bands,  
The soldiers marching well,  
Gangrene cries out and Rupert Brooke's hands  
Clutch in a hemorrhage of hell.

Yet you found God through this? through war,  
Through love found vision, perhaps peace?  
Keep them in your breast like the morning star —  
May their light increase.

Waves on the sea's breast catch the light  
While the hollows between  
Are dark — you are a wave whose height  
Is smitten by the Light unseen,

Urged by the Sea's power to the glory  
Of the christening sun.  
When the calm comes and darkness, transitory  
Be your doubt, or none.

These words from me who have the hard way traveled  
Of pain and thought,  
In a weaving never wholly unraveled,  
Or wholly wrought,

For your spirit and your songs, gladness  
For the hope of you, and praise  
To life, who gave you out of the world's madness  
In these our days.

## BONNYBELL: THE BUTTERFLY

As I shall die, let your belief  
Find in these words too poor and brief  
My soul's essential self.

My grief  
Down to the day I knew you locks  
Its secret word in paradox:  
I who loved truth could not be true,  
Could only love the truth and glow  
With words of truth who loved it so,  
Even while I dishonored you.  
I who loved constancy was false,  
And heeded but in part the calls  
Of loveliness for love and you.  
I am but half of that I hoped,  
And that half hardly more than words  
I cheered my soul with as it groped:  
As from their bowers of rain the birds  
Sing feebly, pining for the sun.  
As I am all of this, by fate  
Lose what I could so well have won,  
Life leaves me half articulate,  
My failure, nature half-expressed,  
Or wholly hidden in my breast.  
Yes, dear, the secret of me lies

## STARVED ROCK

Where words scarce come to analyze.  
Yet who knows why he is this or that?  
What moves, defeats him, works him ill?  
What blood ancestral of the bat  
Narrows his music to the shrill  
Squeak of a flitting thing that hunts  
For gnats, which never singing, fronts  
The full moon flooding down the vale;  
The perfect soul, the nightingale!

You have wooed music all your life,  
And I have sought for love. I think  
My soul was marked, dear, by a wife  
Who loved a man immersed in drink,  
Who crushed her love which would not die,  
If this be true, my soul's great thirst  
Was blended with a fault accursed;  
My mother's love is my soul's cry,  
My father's vileness, lies and lusts,  
His cruel heart, inconstancy  
That kept my mother with the crusts  
Of life to gnaw, are in my blood.  
My rainbow wings I scarce can loose,  
Or if I free them, there's the mud  
That weighs and mars their use.

You have wooed music. But suppose  
The hampered hours and poverty  
Broke down your spirit's harmony,  
Then if you found you could achieve

## BONNYBELL: THE BUTTERFLY

The music in you, if you could  
But pick a pocket or deceive,  
Which would you call the greater good —  
The music or a sin withstood?  
Suppose you passed a window where  
The violin of your despair  
Lay ready for your hands! At last  
You stole it as you hurried past,  
And hid it underneath your rags  
Until you reached your attic room,  
Then tuned the strings and burned the tags.  
And drew the bow till lyric fire  
Should all your thieving thoughts consume:  
In such case what is your desire —  
The music or the violin?  
And what in such case is your sin?  
And if they caught you in your theft,  
Would you, just to be honest, dear,  
Forefront your thief-self as your deft  
And dominant genius, or the ear  
Which tortured you?

Would you not say,  
Music intrigues me night and day?  
My soul is the musician's. First  
In my soul's love is music. Would  
You falsify to keep your good?  
Deny your theft, or put the worst  
Construction on your soul, obscure  
Thereby your soul's investiture

## STARVED ROCK

Of music's gift and music's lure?  
If you were flame you would pretend  
What you would fain be to the end,  
Keep your good name and keep as well  
The violin. May this not be  
In some realm an integrity?

Now for myself, dear, though I lack  
The gift of utterance to explain  
My life's pursuit and passion, pain,  
Or why I acted thus, concealed  
Thoughts that you hold were best revealed,  
Your eyes to heal themselves must track  
And find my soul's way in its quest  
Followed from girlhood without rest.  
Music is not its hope, but love. . . .  
And I saw somehow I could lift  
My life through you, and rise above  
What I had been. And since your gift  
Of love saw me as truthful, true  
I kept that best side to your view,  
And hoped to be what you desired  
If I but struggled, still aspired.  
And as for lapses, even while  
I fooled you with the wanton's smile,  
He was my lover till you came  
To light my life with purer flame.  
Was it, beloved, so great a sin?  
He was a practice violin.  
Oh, how I knew this when your strings

## BONNYBELL: THE BUTTERFLY

Sang to me afterward when I slept  
Upon your breast again. I wept,  
Do you remember? I was grieving  
Neither for him, nor your deceiving,  
Rather (how strange is life) that he  
Was prelude to your harmony;  
Rather that while I walked with him,  
With you I found the cherubim,  
Left my old self at last with wings,  
Saw beauty clear where it was dim  
Before through my imaginings.

Do you suppose the primrose knows  
What skill adds petals to its crown?  
How many failures laugh and frown  
Upon the hand that crosses, sows?  
The hand is ignorant of the power  
Obedient in the primrose flower  
To the hand's skill that toils to add  
New petals till the flower be clad  
In fuller glory. What's the bond  
Between us two, that I respond  
To what you are? Nor do you know  
What lies within me fain to grow  
Under your hand.

But if the worm  
Should call itself the butterfly,  
Since it will soon become one, I  
Better to be myself affirm

## STARVED ROCK

That I am Beauty, Truth — for you  
I would be Beauty, Truth, imbue  
Your life with love and loveliness.  
And you can make me Beauty, Truth,  
And I can bring you soul success  
If you but train my flower whose youth  
Still may be governed, keep erect  
My hope in this poor earthen sod.  
I think this is a task which God  
Appoints for us. We may neglect  
The task in this life, but to find  
It is a task we leave behind,  
Only to meet it, till we see  
Our fate worked out in lives to be.

O, from my lesser self to spread  
My golden wings above your head,  
Through love of love and you discard  
The sting, the rings of green, the shard.  
Oh, to be Psyche, passion tried  
Through flesh, desire, purified!  
Love is my lode-star, music yours —  
Souls must go where the lode-star lures.

## HYMN TO AGNI

God of fire,  
God of the flame of our love,  
Beyond whose might no God is,  
And none in the realm of birth,  
Agni! Adored one,  
May we never suffer in thy friendship!

Thou, who art re-born each day,  
And whose symbol is the sacred drill  
Wherewith fire is made for the temple,  
Morning by morning,  
Freshly create our love as the sun awakes,  
Preserve our love, O Agni!

The crocuses, the dandelions,  
The golden forsythia  
Perished in May.  
But roses burn on the altar of earth,  
Bridal blossoms, whitest of fire,  
Dance in the winds of June.  
Agni, remember us,  
Remember our love!

We have prayed to you, powerful one —  
Thou whose name is first



## STARVED ROCK

In the first of the sacred hymns;  
Thou to whom sacrifices pass  
To the Gods, thou messenger of the Gods,  
Thou who art born a little lower than the most  
    high Indra  
Hast heard our prayer —  
Hear still our prayer:  
Abide with us, O Agni, and befriend;  
Make our hearts as temples,  
And our desire as the drill,  
Wherewith fire is created  
For the sacred sacrifice of love,  
And for a light to our spirits —  
Turn not away from our prayers,  
O Agni!

Here before the fire of the Sun of June  
Kneeling  
Hand in hand,  
Our eyes closed before the splendor of your spirit  
Hear our prayer, O Agni:  
May we never suffer in thy friendship.

## EPITAPH FOR US

One with the turf, one with the tree  
As we are now, you soon shall be,  
As you are now, so once were we.

The hundred years we looked upon  
Were Goethe and Napoleon.  
Now twice a hundred years are gone,

And you gaze back and contemplate,  
Lloyd George and Wilson, William's hate,  
And Nicholas of the bloody fate;

Us, too, who won the German war,  
Who knew less what the strife was for  
Than you, now that the conqueror

Lies with the conquered. You will say:  
"Here sleep the brave, the grave, the gay,  
The wise, the blind, who lost the way."

But for us English, for us French,  
Americans who held the trench,  
You will not grieve, though the rains drench

## STARVED ROCK

The hills and valleys, being these.  
Who pities stocks, or pities trees?  
Or stones, or meadows, rivers, seas?

We are with nature, we have grown  
At one with water, earth, and stone —  
Man only is separate and alone,

Earth sundered, left to dream and feel  
Illusion still in pain made real,  
The hope a mist, but fire the wheel.

But what was love, and what was lust,  
Memory, passion, pain or trust,  
Returned to clay and blown in dust,

Is nature without memory —  
Yet as you are, so once were we,  
As we are now, you soon shall be,

Blind fellows of the indifferent stars  
Healed of your bruises, of your scars  
In love and living, in the wars.

Come to us where the secret lies  
Under the riddle of the skies,  
Surrender fingers, speech, and eyes.

Sink into nature and become  
The mystery that strikes you dumb,  
Be clay and end your martyrdom.

## EPITAPH FOR US

Rise up as thought, the secret know.  
As passionless as stars bestow  
Your glances on the world below,

As a man looks at hand or knee.  
What is the turf of you, what the tree?  
Earth is a phantom — let it be.

## BOTTICELLI TO SIMONETTA

I would give you all my heart, and I have given  
All my heart to you to have and keep  
With your heart, where my heart has found its heaven  
In a light immortal, and a peace like sleep.  
Here is my heart, for you to have and treasure,  
Your woman's heart will treasure it,  
For a love that only love may find a measure,  
And only love like yours can measure it.

In absence and in separation praying  
Before your love, my heart receive,  
My heart which kneels to you, so gently laying  
Hands of deep prayer, too reverent to grieve  
For lives divided, yet compassionate,  
As my poor heart is pitiful for yours.  
These hearts of ours, that know so deep a fate,  
Even as a heart that silently endures,  
Lie on an altar of consuming fire,  
Our hearts together, taking life thereof.  
Ashes must come of two hearts which aspire  
To God, who has given love.

## FLOWER IN THE GARDEN

Flower in the garden,  
Wholly itself and free,  
Yearning and joyous,  
Breathing its charm  
To the passer-by  
On the sighing air —  
Beloved flower!  
Flower desired for something beyond  
Itself as a flower;  
Giving the promise of ecstasy  
Beyond its own being,  
Its place in the garden —  
A shadowed flame  
Of an absolute!

Flower that I have taken  
From its place in the garden  
To realize the ultimate Beauty;  
Flower in the vase at my side,  
Breathing a sweeter life  
Into the air I breathe,  
A spirit that makes me faint,  
Sorrowful with a strange languor.  
Flower no less beautiful,  
But revealing an essence

## STARVED ROCK

That changes my flower.  
O, my flower that is with me but lost,  
Lost in the disclosure of other hues,  
Other scents!

Flower of passion, flower of love,  
Flower that I have won and lost,  
Mystical flower!

## INEXORABLE DEITIES

Deities!  
Inexorable revealers,  
Give me strength to endure  
The gifts of the Muses,  
Daughters of Memory.  
When the sky is blue as Minerva's eyes  
Let me stand unshaken;  
When the sea sings to the rising sun  
Let me be unafraid;  
When the meadow lark falls like a meteor  
Through the light of afternoon,  
An unloosened fountain of rapture,  
Keep my heart from spilling  
Its vital power;  
When at the dawn  
The dim souls of crocuses hear the calls  
Of waking birds,  
Give me to live but master the loveliness.  
Keep my eyes unharmed from splendors  
Unveiled by you,  
And my ears at peace  
Filled no less with the music  
Of Passion and Pain, growth and change.

\* \* \* \* \*



## STARVED ROCK

But O ye sacred and terrible powers,  
Reckless of my mortality,  
Strengthen me to behold a face,  
To know the spirit of a beloved one  
Yet to endure, yet to dare!

## ARIELLE

Arielle! Arielle!  
Gracious and fanciful,  
Laughing and joyous!  
Arielle girlish, queenly, majestic;  
Deep eyed for memory,  
Pensive for dreams.  
Arielle crowned with the light of thought,  
Mystical, reverent,  
Musing on the splendor of life,  
And the blossom of love  
Pressed into her hands —  
Arielle!

Music awakes in the hall!  
Shadowy pools and glistening willows,  
And elfin shapes amid silver shadows  
Are made into sound!  
Arielle listens with hidden eyes,  
Sitting amid her treasures,  
A presence like a lamp of alabaster,  
A yearning gardenia  
That broods in a shaft of light . . .  
Arielle clapping hands and running  
About her rooms,  
Arranging cloths of gold and jars of crystal,

## STARVED ROCK

And vases of ruby cloisonne.  
Arielle matching blues and reds:  
Pomegranates, apples in bowls of jade.  
Arielle reposing, lost in Plato,  
In the contemplation of Agni.  
Arielle, the cup to her lips,  
A laughing Thalia!  
Arielle!

The breath of morning moves through the casement  
window —  
Arielle taking the cool of it on her brow,  
And the ecstasy of the robin's song into her heart.  
Arielle in prayer at dawn  
Laying hands upon secret powers:  
Lead me in the path of love to my love.  
Arielle merging the past and the present,  
As light increases light —  
Arielle adored —  
Arielle!

## SOUNDS OUT OF SORROW

Of all sounds out of the soul of sorrow  
These I would hear no more:  
The cry of a new-born child at midnight;  
The sound of a closing door,

That hushes the echo of departing feet  
When the loneliness of the room  
Is haunted with the silence  
Of a dead god's tomb;

The songs of robins at the white dawn,  
Since I may never see  
The eyes they waked in the April  
Now gone from me;

Music into whose essence entered  
The soul of an hour: —  
A face, a voice, the touch of a hand,  
The scent of a flower.

## MOURNIN' FOR RELIGION

Brothers and sisters, I'm mournin' for religion,  
But I can't get religion, it's my woman interferin'.  
I sing and I pray, and I'm real perseverin',  
But I can't get religion,  
That's all I have to say.  
I know there is a fountain, a Jesús, a comforter,  
A heaven, a Jerusalem, a day of Pentecost,  
Salvation for the wishin', blood for sin's remission,  
A covenant, a promise for souls that are lost.  
But I can't get religion, the salvation feelin',  
The vision of the Lamb, forgiveness and healin'.  
I have a sort of numbness  
When I see the mourners kneelin'.  
I have a kind of dumbness  
When the preacher is appealin'.  
I have a kind of wariness, even contrariness,  
Even while I'm fearin'  
The bottomless pit and the shut gates of heaven.  
It's my woman interferin'—

For you see when they say:  
Come to the mercy seat, come, come,  
The spirit and the bride  
Say come, come,

## MOURNIN' FOR RELIGION

I think of my woman who bore so many children;  
I think of her a cookin' for harvesters in summer;  
I think of her a lyin' there, a dyin' there, the neighbors  
Who came in to fan her and how she never murmured;  
And then I seem to grow number and number,  
And something in me says:  
Why didn't Jesus help her for to die,  
Why did Jesus always pass her by,  
Let her break her health down as I was growing poorer,  
Let her lie and suffer with no medicine to cure her,  
I wouldn't treat a stray dog as Jesus acted to her.  
If these are devil words, I'm a child of the devil.  
And this is why I'm dumb  
As the spirit and the bride say come!

\* \* \* \*

I am old and crippled — sixty in December.  
And I wonder if it's God that stretches out and hands us  
Troubles we remember?  
I'm alone besides, I need the Comforter,  
All the children's grown up, livin' out in Kansas.  
My old friend Billy died of lung fever. . . .  
But the worst of it is I'm really a believer,  
Expect to go to hell if I don't get religion.  
And I need this religion to stop this awful grievin'  
About my woman lyin' there in the cemetery,  
And you can't stop that grievin' simply by believin'.  
So I mourn for religion,  
I mourn for religion,  
My old heart breaks for religion!

## THYAMIS

Thyamis, a gallant of Memphis,  
Where melons were served  
Iced with snow from the Mountains of the Moon;  
Thyamis, a philanderer in Alexandris  
Rich in parchments and terebinth,  
Lies here in the museum.  
His lips are brown as peach leather,  
Through which his teeth are sticking,  
White as squash seeds.

\* \* \* \* \*

Knowing that he must die and leave her  
He slew the lovely Chariclea  
Who sailed with him on the Nile  
Under the moon of Egypt.  
This is the body of Chariclea  
Undesiring the arms of Thyamis.  
This is the remnant of Chariclea,  
Wrapped in a gunny sack,  
Rotted with gums and balsams.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the sands of the desert are stirred  
By the wind when the sun sets,  
The open door of the museum  
Lets in the wind to shake

## THYAMIS

The cerements of Chariclea,  
And the stray hairs on the forsaken head  
Of Thyamis.

\* \* \* \*

Of desire long dead;  
Of a murder done in the days of Pharaoh;  
Of Thyamis dying who took to death  
The lovely Chariclea;  
Of Chariclea who shrank  
From the love death of Thyamis  
The multitude passes, unknowing.

\* \* \* \*



## I SHALL GO DOWN INTO THIS LAND

I shall go down into this land  
Of the great Northwest:  
This land of the free ordinance,  
This land made free for the free  
By the patriarchs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Shall it be Michigan,  
Or Illinois,  
Or Indiana?  
These are my people,  
These are my lovers, my friends —  
Mingle my dust with theirs,  
Ye sacred powers!

\* \* \* \* \*

Clouds, like convoys on infinite missions,  
Bound for infinite harbors  
Float over the length of this land.  
And in the centuries to come  
The rocks and trees of this land will turn,  
These fields and hills will turn  
Under unending convoys of clouds —  
O ye clouds!  
Drench my dust and mingle it  
With the dust of the pioneers;

## I SHALL GO DOWN INTO THIS LAND

My mates, my friends,  
Toilers and sufferers,  
Builders and dreamers,  
Lovers of freedom.

\* \* \* \* \*

O Earth that looks into space,  
As a man in sleep looks up,  
And is voiceless, at peace,  
Divining the secret —  
I shall know the secret  
When I go down into this land  
Of the great Northwest!

\* \* \* \* \*

Draw my dust  
With the dust of my beloved  
Into the substance of a great rock,  
Upon whose point a planet flames,  
Nightly, in a thrilling moment  
Of divine revelation  
Through endless time!

## SPRING LAKE

Βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμπιο καρήνων χρομενος κῆρ.

— *Iliad.*

### I

Some thought a bomb hit  
Trotter's garage.  
Some thought a comet  
Blew up the Lodge.  
Milem Alkire was riding in a Dodge,  
Saw the water splashing, and a great light flashing,  
And a thousand arrows flying from the heaven's glow;  
And heard a great banging and a howling clanging  
Of a bull-hide's string to a monstrous bow.

### II

Milem Alkire became a changed man,  
So the thing began, guess it if you can.  
He turned in an hour from a man who was sour  
To a singing, dancing satyr like Pan.  
He hobbled and clattered as if nothing mattered  
Down in his cellar for any strange fellow,  
Bringing up the bottles, clinking, winking,  
For the crowd that was drinking.  
All against the statutes in such case provided.

## SPRING LAKE

Drew well water to cool the wine off,  
Polished up the glasses with a humorous cough.  
Milem Alkire for years had resided  
A quiet, pious, law abiding citizen  
Turned in an hour to a wag who derided  
The feelings of the people, the village steeple,  
And the ways that befit a man —  
This Spring Lake citizen.

### III

And about the time  
That Milem Alkire  
Became a wine seller,  
And begetter of crime,  
With parties on his lawn  
From mid-night to dawn,  
Making the wine free  
Under the pine tree,  
Starling Turner's wife ran away,  
A woman who before was anything but gay.  
Never had a lover in her life, so they say,  
But like other clay, had the longing to stray.  
She saw a cornet player,  
An idler, a strayer,  
And left her husband furious threatening to slay her,  
And cursing musicians who have no honest missions.  
So Starling Turner, a belated learner  
Of life as music, laughter, folly,  
Grew suddenly jolly, forgot his melancholy,

## STARVED ROCK

Became a dancer and rounded up the fiddlers,  
Got up a contest of fifty old fiddlers,  
With prizes for fiddling from best to middling:  
A set of fine harness for the best piece of fiddling.  
Work stopped, business stopped, all went mad,  
Mad about music, the preachers looked sad  
For music, the like of which the village never had. . . .  
The children in the street were shockingly bad,  
And danced like pixies scantily clad;  
Knocked away the crutches from venerable hobblers,  
Threw pebbles at the windows of grocers and cobblers,  
Made fun of the preachers, the grammar school teachers,  
Stole spring chickens and turkey gobblers,  
Roasted hooked geese in front of the police.  
Till the quidnuncs decided it wasn't any use,  
The devil had let a thousand devils loose.

### IV

Then folks began to read old books forbidden.  
Carpenters orated and expatiated  
On Orphic doctrines and wisdoms long hidden,  
A Swede who couldn't speak began to talk Greek.  
There were meetings in the park from dawn to dark.  
And wild talk of razing the village, effacing  
The plain little houses and the town replacing  
With carved stone, columns and temples gracing  
Gardens and vistas the water front embracing.  
And others would create a brand new state.  
So fire broke out in the strangest places.

## SPRING LAKE

The belated traveler beheld elfin faces  
Springing from nothing, to vanish in a second.  
Potatoes unthrown went whizzing round corners.  
Voices were heard and white fingers beckoned,  
Till all the wise ones, doubters and scorners  
Although they winced, in some way evinced  
That their minds were convinced.  
Something was wrong,  
The evidence was strong,  
The air was full of song:  
You woke out of sleep and heard a violin,  
A harp or a horn;  
And rose up and followed the sound growing thin  
At the break of morn.

### v

Music, music, music was blown  
Over the waters, out of the woodlands,  
Grassy valleys and sunny meadow lands  
In the mid spaces, tone on tone.  
The pasturing flocks were sleeker grown  
And multiplied in a way unknown. . . .  
And little Alice bright of eye  
Dreamed and began to prophesy:  
And said the strayer, the cornet player,  
Who took Starling Turner's wife away,  
Is coming back at an early day:  
Look out, said Alice, to Imogene,  
Red-lipped, bright-eyed, turned eighteen,

## STARVED ROCK

You have danced too much on the village green.  
Look out for the cornet player, I mean.  
I know who he is for my eyes are keen.  
Your blood is desiring, but yet serene.  
I know his face and his bright desire,  
Laurel leaves are around his brow;  
He carries a horn, but sometimes a lyre.  
His eyes are blue and his face is fire.  
Look out, said Alice, his touch is dire,  
Keep to the house, or the church's spire.

### VI

And what was next? The girl disappeared.  
As Alice feared, no fate interfered.  
A posse collected, hunted and peered,  
Raced through the night till their eyes were bleared,  
And looked for Imogene, cried and cheered  
When a clew was found, or a doubt was cleared.  
A posse with pitch-forks, scythes and axes,  
Shot-guns, pistols, knives and rifles,  
Hunts for Imogene, never relaxes,  
Runs over meadows for luring trifles:  
The wave of grain or a weed that tosses;  
And curse and say what a terrible loss is  
Come to Spring Lake: a wife's enticed,  
And then this fairest maid is abducted.  
Why are the innocent sacrificed?  
We are a people well conducted.  
What is the curse, or is it the war?

## SPRING LAKE

Why is it every one here is housing  
Fiddlers, idlers, fancy dancers.  
At Milem Alkire's why carousing;  
Everything that the good abhor  
In lovers and romancers?  
The world is mad, the village is mad,  
Even the cattle bellow and run.  
Old maid, young maid, man and lad  
Have eaten of something half insane;  
Such antics never before were done  
And never it seems may be again  
Under the shining sun.  
And now comes villainy out of the fun.  
Come with the torch, come with the halter,  
Gather the posse, stay nor falter,  
Catch the scoundrel who spoiled our peace  
And hang him up in the maple tree's  
Highest branch. For what is the law  
If it can't slip the noose and draw  
This minstrel man to a thing of awe?

### VII

Then the pastor said: Talk of the gallows  
Is just the thing for it's righteous malice;  
And we need hearts with piety callous  
For work like this, I might say salus  
Populi, but bright-eyed Alice  
Can help us in this matter kinetic  
Who has grown psychic and grown prophetic,



## STARVED ROCK

Sees round corners, and looks through doors  
And spies old treasure under the floors.  
And I have heard that Alice averred,  
The cornet player's the self-same bird  
Who enticed the wife of Starling Turner  
And kidnapped Imogene; he will spurn her  
Later for some one else, unless we  
Capture and hang the vile sojourner;  
So now for Alice, he said, and bless me!

### VIII

Alice came out to lead the mob  
Catch the scoundrel and finish the job.  
Down to Fruitport before it is dark  
Come, said Alice, Joan of Arc.  
Farmers, butchers, cobblers, dentists,  
Lawyers, doctors, preachers, druggists  
Hustled and ran in the afternoon,  
Following Alice who led the way  
Chanting an ancient roundelay,  
A wild and haunting tune.  
Her hair streamed over her little shoulders  
Back in the wind for all beholders.  
And her little feet were as swift and white  
As waves that dance in the noonday light.  
Youths were panting, middle aged men  
Had to rest and resume again.  
She ran the posse almost to death,  
All were gasping and out of breath.

## SPRING LAKE

At last they halted upon the ridge.  
There! said Alice, beside the bridge  
Under its shadow. Look, he's there  
Weaving lilies in Imogene's hair;  
His musical instrument laid aside  
Now he has charmed the maiden pride  
Of Imogene who is not his bride,  
Come, said Alice, before they hide.

### IX

They ran from the ridge,  
Looked under the bridge.  
There! he escapes, said Alice, the fay.  
Where? Howled the mob! which is the way?  
There's Imogene wrapped as if in a trance,  
Said the preacher, there where the waters dance.  
I saw as it were a shaft of light  
Steal from her side, vanish from sight.  
The cobbler said: it was like a comet;  
The druggist, water by a bomb hit.  
Yes, said the lawyer, I heard a splashing  
And saw a light as of waters flashing  
Or a thousand arrows of splendor flying  
I heard a booming, banging, clanging  
Of a bull's hide string, it was terrifying.  
No, said Alice, this form of light,  
That stole away and vanished from sight,  
That was the fellow, said Alice, the sprite.

## STARVED ROCK

Go after him, follow through meadow and hollow  
The God Apollo, the great Apollo!

### X

They went to Imogene then and took her,  
Spoke to her, slapped her hands and shook her,  
Asked her who it was that forsook her,  
Why she had left her home and wandered,  
What was the dream she sat and pondered,  
And Imogene said, it's a dream of dread,  
Now that the glory of it is fled.  
Where am I now, where is my lover?  
God of my dreams, singer and rover.  
I danced with the muses in flowering meadows;  
We lay on lawns of whispering shadows;  
We walked by moonlight where pine trees stood  
Feathery clear in the crystal flood;  
He gave me honey and grapes for food.  
We rode on the clouds and counted the stars.  
He sang me songs of the ancient wars.  
He told me of cities and temples builded  
Under his hand, we waded rivers  
By star-light and by sun-light gilded;  
By shades where the green of the laurel shivers.  
But it came to this, and this I see:  
Life is beautiful if you are free,  
If you live yourself like the laurel tree.

## SPRING LAKE

### XI

Then some of them teased her, the posse seized her,  
They tore the lilies out of her hair.  
Back to the village, exclaimed the preacher,  
Back to your home, exclaimed the teacher.  
You've been befooled, said Alice, the fay,  
And back went Imogene in despair,  
Weeping all the way!

## THE BARBER OF SEPO

Trimmed but not cut too short; the temples shaved,  
Neck clipped around, not shaved, an oil shampoo,  
You have a world of time before the train  
And when it comes it stops ten minutes — then  
The depot's just a block away.

Oh yes,  
This is my own, my native town. But when  
I earn the money to get out, I go.  
I've had my share of bad luck — seems to me  
Without my fault, as least life's actinism  
Makes what we call our luck or lack of luck. . . .

Go down this street a block, find Burney Cole  
And ask him why I was not graduated  
From Sepo's High School at the time he was.  
It was this way: I fell in love that spring  
With Lillie Balzer, and it ended us,  
Lillie and me, for finishing that year.  
I thought of Lillie morning, noon and night  
And Lillie thought of me, and so we flunked.  
That thinned the class to Burney Cole, and he  
Stood up and spoke twelve minutes scared to death.  
Progress of Science was his theme, committed

## THE BARBER OF SEPO

To memory, the gestures timed, they trained him  
Out in the woods near Big Creek.

Lil and I

Sat there and laughed — the town was in the hall,  
Applause terrific, bouquets thick as hops.  
And when they handed Burney his diploma  
The crowd went wild.

How does this razor work?

Not shaving you too close? I try to please . . .  
Burney was famous for a night, you see.  
They thought his piece was wonderful, such command  
Of language, depth of thought beyond his years.  
Next morning with his ears and cheeks still burning,  
Flushed like a god, as Keats says, Burney stood  
Behind the counter in the grocery store  
Beginning then to earn the means to take  
A course in Science — when a customer  
Came in and said: a piece of star tobacco,  
Young fellow, hurry! Such is fame — one night  
You're on a platform gathering in bouquets,  
Next morning without honor and forgotten,  
Commanded like a boot-black.

Five years now

Burney has clerked, some say has given up  
The course in science, and I hate to ask him . . .  
But as for me, there was a lot of talk,  
And Lillie went away, began to sport.  
She's been around the world, is living now

## STARVED ROCK

In Buenos Ayres. Love's a funny thing:  
It levels ranks, puts monarch or savant  
Beside the chorus girl and in her hands.  
I stayed here, did not have to leave for shame,  
But Lillie changed my life.

When she was gone  
My conscience hurt me, and that very fall  
When I was most susceptible, responsive,  
And penitent, we had a great revival.  
And just to use the lingo: after much  
Wrestling at the Seat of Mercy, prayers  
And ministrations then I saw the light,  
Became converted, got the ecstasy.  
I wrote to Lillie who was in Chicago  
To seek salvation, told her of myself.  
She wrote back, you are cracked — go take a pill. . . .  
I know you've come to get your hair trimmed, shaved,  
Also to hear my story — you shall hear.  
The elders saw in me a likely man  
And said there is a preacher. First I knew  
They had a purse made up to send me off  
To learn theology, and so I went.

I plunged into the stuff that preachers learn:  
The Hebrew language, Aramaic and Syriac;  
The Hebrew ideas — rapid survey — oh, yes,  
Rapid survey, that was the usual thing.  
Histories of Syria and Palestine;  
Theology of the Synoptics, eschatology.

## THE BARBER OF SEPO

Doctrine of the Trinity, Docetism,  
And Christian writings to Eusebius.  
Well, in the midst of all of this what happens?  
A fellow shows me Draper and this stuff  
Went up like shale and soft rock in a blast.  
My room mate was John Smith, he handed me  
This book of Draper's. What do you suppose?  
This scamp was there to get at secret things,  
Was laughing in his sleeve, had no belief.  
He used to say: "They'd never know me now."  
By which he meant he was a different person  
In some round dozen places, and each place  
Was different from the others, he was native  
To each place, played his part there, was unknown  
As fitted to another, hence his words  
"They'd never know me now."

And so it was  
This John Smith acted through the course, came through  
A finished preacher. But they found me out  
As soon as Draper gnawed my faith in two.  
The good folks back in Sepo took away  
The purse they lent and left me high and dry.  
So I came back and learned the barber's trade,  
And here I am. But when I save enough  
I mean to start a little magazine  
To show what is the matter. Do you know?

It's something on the shelf — not booze or jam:  
It's that old bible, precious family bible,



## STARVED ROCK

That record of the Hebrew thought and life —  
That book that takes a course of years to study,  
Requires Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek and Coptic  
And epigraphy, metaphysics, not  
Because the book itself is rich in these  
But just because when you would know a book  
In every character and turn of phrase  
And know what's back of it and went into it  
You draw the learning of the world, that's all.  
Take Plato, if you will, and study him  
After this manner, you will travel far  
In every land and realm. But this is nothing.  
The preachers are a handful to the world.  
They eat this dead stuff like bacteria  
That clean away decay. The harm is here  
Among the populace, the country, all  
That makes for life as life.

See what I mean?  
We have three thousand people in this town.  
Say in this state there are a thousand towns,  
And say in every town on every Sunday  
In every year this book is taught and preached  
To every human being from the time  
It's five years old as long as it will stand  
And let itself be taught — what have you done?  
You have created, kept intact a body,  
An audience and voting strength — for whom,  
The reformer, the fanatic, non-conformist,  
The man of principle who wants a law

## THE BARBER OF SEPO

And those who, whether consciously or not,  
Live in the illusion that there is an end,  
A consummation, fifth act to this world,  
Millennium, as they say; and at the last  
When you get rid of sin (but they must say  
What sin is) then the world will be at peace,  
Life finished, perfect, nothing more to do  
But tend to business and enjoy yourself  
And die in peace, reach heaven. Don't you see?  
These people are deluded. For this stuff  
Called life is like a pan of bread you knead:  
You push it down one place and up it puffs  
In another place. And so while they control  
The stuff of life through Hebrew influence  
Of duty, business, fear, ascetism  
And yes, materialism, for it is that,  
The dough escaped, puffs out, the best of it,  
Its greater, part escapes us. So I say  
That bible taught in every village, hamlet  
And all its precepts, curses, notables,  
Preached fifty times a year creates the crowd  
That runs the country at the bidding of  
Your mediocrities, your little statesmen,  
Your little editors and moralists.  
And that's your culture, your American  
*Kultur*. . . .

I'll finish you with eggs, it's better  
Than soap is for the hair. You've lots of time.  
I think I'll start my magazine next year.

## STARVED ROCK

Step down this way — over the bowl, that's it —  
A moment while I ring this money up.  
As I was saying — is the water cold? —  
Now back into the chair — as I was saying  
That book upon the shelf has made our culture.  
We must undo it. . .  
Yes, your train is whistling — so long!

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW

Let's sit here very quiet, self-controlled,  
Talk quietly, under this glorious tree,  
The internes are too far away to hear.  
They will stand there if we are calm.

You look

Much better than you did. And as for me,  
Since I tried leaping from my window, I  
Seem on the mend, sleep better, do not feel  
So much like running, flying from the fears  
As I did three weeks since. Here is my tale:

My first step in this world was as a soldier,  
Turned seventeen and off to free the Cubans.  
I landed at Matanzas, served my time.  
Oh Liberty! Oh! struggles to make free  
All peoples, everywhere! And when I saw  
The American republic move to strike  
The chains of tyranny, I said: I die  
For such a cause, or live to see it won —  
How glorious! My youthful mind was full  
Of Byron, Shelley, Paine, and many more —  
And when I saw my republic go to war,  
Just as a good Samaritan, I said,

## STARVED ROCK

This is my hour, I'm on the pinnacle,  
Life is divine at last.

But on a sudden  
A north wind froze my waters, caught my stars  
To points of vision which before had been  
Mixed in the fluent time. We up and stole  
The Philippines, spit on our sacred charter,  
Turned all the thing to guts, until I heard  
Their growl alone which I thought spirit voices  
When we had warred for Cuba! 'Twas enough;  
What was my country? Just a mass of slickers  
Talking philanthropy and five per cent,  
A pious, blundering booby lodged at last  
In a great cæcum mouthing Destiny.  
God, with a leader just an actor-man,  
Clean shaven, shifty, shallow, whored upon  
By mercantilists and their butcher creed.  
I mean McKinley, Hanna. Write it down:  
They barbarized our Grecian temple, placed  
Cheap colored windows in its marble walls—  
May history be their hell.

But as for me,  
They talked of God so much, I said at last  
I'll learn all they can teach concerning God.  
This restless soldier spirit led me on,  
And just because I sensed the faithless age,  
Loveless and purposeless except for gold,  
The adventurer in me began to crop.

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW

Oh yes, the Cuban business started me.  
And so I went to college to prepare  
For the ministry, as they thought, go through the course  
Called theological, saying for the first:  
"They'd never know me now."

I see at last  
I am not one but many minds at once,  
And many personalities. As a boy  
I took the color of the leaves or wall  
Where I was resting, climbing. If in truth  
I lived three months with an uncle, then they said  
You look just like your uncle. When I worked  
Under a lawyer's tutelage, they said:  
How much your face resembles his. I knew  
My face and voice and gestures simulated  
Those I admired or lived with. But besides  
I took a certain pleasure, impish, maybe,  
In egging on, agreeing with, the souls  
Whom I sought out; I used to tell my uncle,  
A man of firmest piety, what I heard  
Of blasphemy about the village, just  
To hear him deprecate it, look with dark  
And flashing eyes upon such sin, while I,  
With serious face and earnest sympathy  
With what he felt, was laughing in my sleeve.  
Here is the germ then of my after life:  
The faculty that harmonized my hue  
Of spirit with the place, the person, while

## STARVED ROCK

Something in me, perhaps supremest self,  
Stood quite aloof and smiled.

But, as I said,  
When our Republic left its hill of vision,  
Descended to the place of herding hogs,  
This self of me, the adventurer, rose up  
And led me forth to play with life, and first  
To try theology, as I have said . . .  
I was a wonder bred among the crew  
Of quiet, gate-toothed, crook-nosed psychopaths,  
The foul-breathed, thick-lipped, onanists who filled  
The seminary, stared at me to see  
How I learned Sanscrit, could defend and rout  
The atheistic speculations. Well,  
What I enjoyed most was to get a crowd  
Of celibates and talk of chastity,  
And get them in a glow, and say to them:  
The mind is fortified by abstinence,  
The spirit clarified and lifted up —  
I got a thrill somehow. But all the time  
I knew a girl named Ella. Oftentimes  
Lying beside her I would shriek with laughter  
And she would ask, what is the matter, John?  
And I would say: I'm thinking of a song  
I heard one time: "They'd never know me now."  
And Ella said: If Dr. Simpson knew  
That you were here with me, you'd take a fall  
Out of the Seminary's second floor. . . .

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW

But I went through and didn't fall. And thought  
This is a way to live, I'll preach awhile,  
And see what comes. I took a church and preached,  
Was known as Smith the eloquent, the earnest.  
But all the time I heard a voice that said:  
"They'd never know me now." When I came in  
The Sunday School and little children flocked  
About my knees and patient teachers looked  
With white, pure faces at me, then that voice  
"They'd never know me now" was in my ear. . . .

Well, to go on, a widow in my church  
Young, beautiful and rich began to beat  
Her wings around my flame, and on the Sunday  
I preached about the rich young man, she came,  
Invited me to dinner. We commenced,  
Were married in six months. And to conserve  
Her properties I studied law, at last  
Was spending days with brokers, business men,  
Began to tell her that my health was failing,  
Saw doctors frequently to play the part.  
And then she said: You must resign your charge,  
Your health is breaking, dear. And I resigned  
To spend the time in checking mortgages,  
Collecting rents:—"They'd never know me now" . . .

We went the round of summer places, travel,  
Saw Europe, China, India and the Isles.  
Near Florence had a villa for a time,  
Met people of all kinds, when I was forty



## STARVED ROCK

I had a thousand selves, but if I had  
A self in truth it was submerged or scrawled  
Like a palimpsest all over and so lost.  
I didn't know myself, was anything  
To every one, and everything to all.  
I felt the walking age come on me now:  
A polar bear in a terrible rhythm swings  
His body back and forth behind the bars,  
And I would walk in restlessness or think  
Of other skies and places, teased and stung  
By memories of my other selves, by wonder  
About what may be happening here or there;  
What are they doing now? What is she doing?  
There were a dozen shes to wonder about,  
And if you think of one you wish to see,  
And dream she knows delight apart from you,  
You simply thrill, the wings you lost revolve,  
Like thumbs, vestigial stubs — but there you sit.  
Thank God the aeroplane came on to help,  
And wipe out distance, for you find at last  
Distance is tragedy, terrifies the soul  
With space which must be mastered by the soul.

And so I bought a hydroplane. Perhaps  
Would be upon my lawn at sun-down holding  
These children on my knees, a lovely picture!  
Then as a fish darts out of darkened water  
Into a water sun-lit, there would come  
A thought — we'll say of Alice — in two hours  
I'd be upon her little sleeping porch

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW

Two hundred miles away, beneath the stars  
Of middle summer, having killed that space,  
And found the hour I wanted — hearing too  
“They'd never know me now” sung in my ears.

And I remember when we were in Florence  
My tribe had gone to Milan for some weeks,  
And I was quite alone, too bored to live.  
One listless afternoon who should come in?  
My wife's friend Constance — but to tell the truth  
More friend of mine than hers, for all my life  
I seemed to have these secret understandings,  
And was two persons to a twain who thought  
They were the bond, whereas the bond existed  
Between myself and one, and to the other  
Was not so much as dreamed.

And Constance brought  
A certain Countess with her. In a glance  
We two, the Countess and myself, beheld  
A flame that joined our hands. And in a week  
The Countess took me on her yacht to Capri,  
And round the Mediterranean. No one knew,  
Not Constance, nor my wife, for I returned  
Before she came from Milan.

Oh that week!  
That breeze that sung the port-holes, waters blue  
And stars at night and music; and the Countess  
Whose voice was like a lute of gold, who lived,

## STARVED ROCK

Knew life, was unafraid. She heard me say  
"They'd never know me now." And softly murmured  
Smiling the while: *il lupo cangia*  
*Il pelo ma non il vizio*  
Adding, *Qual matto!* Something yet remains  
That makes you charming! Oh the feasts and wine,  
The songs and poems, till at last too soon  
We anchored in the bay of Naples. When  
I saw Vesuvius, then I felt again  
That sinking of the heart that I had known,  
That sickness, strange, nostalgia, from a boy,  
Of which a word again. But now it was  
Precursive of the end, the finished idyll.  
The Countess took my hand, with misty eyes —  
They let me off and rowed me to the dock,  
I caught the train to Florence, magically  
Before I had forgotten, seemed to be  
Upon the yacht still, was in truth alone  
Amid the silence of my dining room,  
Supping alone — "They'd never know me now!"

Later I had the fever, was delirious  
And saw myself receding as if backing  
Into a funnel toward the little end,  
And growing smaller as the funnel narrowed  
Until I was so small I held myself  
Within the palm's hand of my other self,  
Laughed like a devil, scared the nurse to death,  
Saying "They'd never know me now — just look!"  
My wife too had the fever. I awoke

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW.

Out of this illness, found that she was gone,  
Had died a week before and for a week  
Had been entombed while I was raving — then  
If any real self of me ever was it came  
Back to me then. I bowed my head and wept  
And scanned my life back:

What was that in me  
Which made me homesick from a boy right through  
This life of mine, not for my home, for something,  
Some place, some hand, some scene, which made me dread  
All partings, overwhelmed me with a grief  
For ended raptures, kept my brain too full  
Of memories, never lost, that grew until  
I lost myself, and seemed a thousand selves  
Wandering through a thousand years, how restless!

Then mutterings shook our skies! Another war,  
France, Germany and England, so it seemed  
Best to return here to America.  
I gathered up the children — all but one,  
The boy eighteen escaped me, ran away  
And joined the English army. Now I saw  
One self of me repeated, that which went  
To free the Cubans! Curse these freedom wars!  
They shipped him off to India, soon he had  
His fill of liberty. But I came back  
And here I am. "They'd never know me now!"

## STARVED ROCK

For what is left of me, what ever was  
To be peeled off to realest core? The soldier  
Gone out of me entirely; long ago,  
The dreamer of a better world; the self  
That said I'm on the pinnacle, took arms  
To free the Cubans; self of me that hungered  
For pyramids and mountains, ancient streams,  
Nile and the Ganges; self of me that turned  
To be a father holding on his knees  
A romping bevy; self of me that dreamed  
One heart, one hand enough, oh even the self  
That dreamed there is a hand a heart for me,  
Who found in truth no solace in the wife  
But only a teasing, torturing recollection  
That I had missed the one, or missed the many.

So I was in America again,  
Had fled the war and plunged into the war: —  
The waves roared yonder, but the shores were here  
Where wreckage, putrid monsters were thrown up,  
Corpses of ancient liberties and bones  
Of treasured beauty; and I saw the Land  
Don every despot weapon, as it did  
When I fought for the Cubans, even worse.  
They shipped my boy to Africa; in spite  
Of censorship I pieced the picture out,  
Knew what he suffered, how they took his faith  
And dimmed its flame with ordure. Then came forth  
That father self of me. I brooded on  
His blue eyes, gentle ways, sat terrified

## THEY'D NEVER KNOW ME NOW

And tried to trace the days through and the years  
When he had slipped from just a little boy  
Into a stripling, soldier finally —  
While I — what was I doing? Oh, my God,  
Living these other selves, oblivious  
That this boy was. I'd jump from soundest sleep,  
Thinking of him in Africa, and seized  
With dreams that I must fly to him. O years  
Wherein I lost that boy. How could I live  
So many lives and not lose out of some,  
Some precious thing? Well, then I broke at last,  
They brought me here: "They'd never know me now."

year that I had spent in the  
year that I had spent in the  
Altho' I feel that the world is not the same  
Must I change my thoughts and say to myself,  
Must I not learn to look back upon the life  
and see it as a thing of the past?

## NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN

You call this a world! Cloud cuckoo town,  
Nephelo coccygia, warp and woof,  
Now at the last I write it down,  
Since I no longer have the proof  
To show it isn't opera bouffe,  
A moving picture film and scene;  
Stage world, with the glue between  
The angels' feathers, the devil's hoof  
Neither violent nor venene.

\* \* \* \*

Eheu! The middle of the way too —  
Gethsemane and left in the lurch.  
Storms frowning up the dying day too,  
Bending a weed that was a birch.  
I can step right over the tallest church.  
Trumpets have shrunk to trumpet toys,  
Tottle-te-toot! I hear the clocks  
Ticking in paper breasts. What noise!  
Gorges and towering rocks  
Are just the canvas He employs,  
With gelatine rivers and candy lochs,  
Shored in with painted blocks.

I passed through a jungle where smoky mosses  
Hung from the trees, the crocodile

## NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN

Slept or clambered about the fosses;  
Buzzards roosting, not very vile;  
Rivers of red-ink shed for crosses.  
Centaur's with arrows file on file  
Drew and shouted: he seems to smile  
Let's make him weep a while.

Look out for the lion! Said I, with a scowl,  
Let the lion growl:  
Cat-gut scraped in the painted wings.  
Does the terrible tiger howl:  
Tin cans and resined strings.  
Do the dead gibber and does the owl  
Hoot where the shroud is slipping, clings?  
Who pressed the squeaky springs  
In the death bird that it sings?

And you, sir! Well, one time I was sure  
You carried a poisoned dart!  
And now you're empty space as pure  
As the sky when clouds are blown apart.  
Ether! Radium! Nothing! A cure  
For grit and dust which start  
Grief in this Waterbury heart.

For I had trod the cobra, found  
He is but calico, cotton stuffed.  
The boa chased me round and round,  
Hyenas tracked me, licked and snuffed,



## STARVED ROCK

And made my poor heart flutter and pound,  
Until I saw the mirror is all,  
And the wood became a rare-bit dream  
With monstrous faces and figures packed.  
And then you ask: Is the mirror cracked,  
Or is it so bright that it casts a beam  
Through all the shadow scheme?

One time I saw a river's bank  
Shaved down with spades as sheer as a wall,  
Wasp holes, snake holes cut in two  
Brought these molds of earth to view.  
I turned away where the air was blank  
And here was a thing fantastical:  
Space was cored like the honey comb  
With forms of things that crawl and roam,  
Animals, men. As I am alive  
I saw the form of a horse and cow  
Edged with air and hollow as space.  
But a horse and cow began to thrive  
In just a second, a drifting mist  
Flowed into the molds before my face.  
And the animals moved, I don't know how,  
Out of the all surrounding mesh,  
Creatures of bone and flesh!

And it was just the same with men. I vow  
I saw an astral stuff poured in  
Pockets of air and men became  
Voices talking of good and evil,

## NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN

Virtue, courage, vice and sin,  
God and the devil.

For the all unfolding Air is what?  
The Great Idea, if so I may say,  
A sort of Ocean leaping to waves.  
And what do you care if they pass away?  
They sink to their source, not into graves.  
Beasts may vanish, races decay,  
The Ocean will always remain the same;  
With new waves rising, no two alike;  
Waves that are little and waves that rise  
In storms and touch the skies.

R. Browning, you were a man of power,  
But I don't think much of your tower.  
And I see no use of blowing a horn,  
The tower is merely papier-maché,  
And comes no higher than to my knees.  
I step right over it — pick a flower,  
Purple, it may be, called heart's ease  
And go with the way of the seas.

For I am an optimist better than you:  
This dream is hell, but it's all to the good:  
The Ocean is water in calm or flood.  
There's nothing wrecked, or wrongly wrought,  
There's nothing real but Thought!

## THE OAK TREE

The oak in later August,  
Before his leaves are strewn,  
And the sky is blue as June,  
Trembles from trunk to branches  
For frosts that will be soon  
From the valleys of the moon!

For breezes blown in August  
Veer north with cold and rain;  
And the oak tree sighs and shivers  
For lights that shift and wane:  
As a strong man sees the specters  
Of age, disease and pain,  
The oak flings up to heaven  
His branches in the rain.

September comes, September  
Spreads out a sky that chills.  
The owl hoots and the cricket  
Beside the roadway shrills,  
And on the stricken hills.  
But the oak tree, the oak tree  
Still flaunts his shining leaves.  
No change has come but swallows  
Who fled the summer eaves!

## THE OAK TREE

But when October breezes,  
And cold November gales  
Descend upon the oak tree  
What strength of him avails,  
Grown naked to the tempest,  
For life that sleeps and fails?  
O oak tree, oak tree,  
The winter snow prevails!  
It cannot be your branches,  
It is the wind that wails!

## THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

Eagle, your broken wings are tangled  
Among the mountain ferns  
On a ledge of rock on high.  
Below the yawning chasm turns  
To blackness, but the evening planet burns  
Above the gulf in a gold and purple sky!

Vultures and kites  
Fly to their rookeries  
In the rocks  
With swift and ragged wings against the lights.  
From levels and from leas  
Haste the returning flocks.  
Foxes have holes and serpents the grass for flight.  
Eagle, arise! It is night.

The world's wanderer finds you  
As he climbs the mountains  
In the unending quest.  
Can you spread wings across the darkening chasm  
To the craggy nest,  
Where the foreboding mate lies still?  
Croak for the evening star,  
And beat your shattered wings against your breast!  
Across the gulf the wanderer sees afar  
A light in the house on the hill!

## WASHINGTON HOSPITAL

That's right, sponge off his face. My name? Oh, yes,  
James Frothingham, a reverend, have the church  
At the corner of Ayer and Knox Streets, Methodist.  
As I was passing by a vile saloon -  
Some men were entering the back room, saying  
Is he dead or drunk, and such things. I looked in,  
Went in at last and saw this fellow there,  
Hunched, doubled down into a chair asleep,  
Mud on his face as you saw, clothes bespattered,  
The smell of drink upon him. Then we took him  
And brought him here, I helped, a Christian duty.  
But more important, if he wakes I'm here  
To bring his soul to Christ before he dies -  
And he is dying. Yes, it's plain enough  
The snows of death are falling. Sponge his face,  
And wash his hands! I never saw such hands  
Slender and beautiful! Now you have sponged  
His face, look at that brow - it terrifies -  
He looks now like a god - who is this man?  
I'll tell you all I know: These men were talking  
And this is what they said: This is the fellow  
They voted yesterday from booth to booth,  
They voted him twenty times, and kept him drunk  
To vote him. First they found him at the station,  
A little tipsy, talking of his griefs.

## STARVED ROCK

The conductor put him off here, being drunk.  
And so these fellows for election day  
Took him in hand and voted him around,  
This was the talk.

Look at the curse of drink!  
If he had touched no drink, he had not been  
Tipsy to fall into these ruffian hands,  
Who gave him drink and drink and used him thus  
To violate the suffrage, lose his life  
Through drink, as he will lose it. He is dying,  
Death comes of Sin — what plainer truth than this?  
Sin blinds, too, for that brow could comprehend  
All things by using what God gave to it.  
I do not know his name, with your permission  
I'll search his pockets — yes, here is a letter —  
No signature, looks like a draught — I'll read:

“ Why have you wounded me with words like these:  
' He has great genius but no moral sense,'  
And written to another! Oh my love!  
By this love which I bear you, by the God  
Who reigns in heaven do I swear to you  
My soul is like a wandering star, consumed  
By its own passion, fire, and the eternal  
Longing for the eternal, wandering, erring,  
But flaming, loving light, aspiring to  
The Light of Lights, some sun, I do not know.  
It is incapable of aught but honor.  
And save for follies, trifles in excess,

## WASHINGTON HOSPITAL

Which I lament, but which in men of wealth,  
Or worldly power would never raise a word,  
I can recall no act of mine to bring  
A blush to your cheek or to mine.

My love,

My erring which has counted, by the test  
Of strength or weakness for the game of life,  
Has been Quixotic honor, chivalry.  
And to indulge this feeling I have paid,  
Though it has been my true voluptuousness,  
My highest, purest pleasure. Yes, for this  
I threw away a fortune, glad to throw it,  
Rather than suffer wrong, though trivial,  
As worldly men would count it:— for a father's  
Laughter at my writing turned away  
To follow voices, and defied his will  
To harness me to business. So it is  
To keep my spirit spotless from the world,  
As I have visioned things, I came at last  
By this deserted shore, alone, alone,  
Now quite alone since you withdrew yourself,  
Took back your hand and left me to my way,  
Traveled so long that I can see the tomb  
At the vista's end not very far.

Oh, love,

Why is there not a heart that loves but mine?  
If you had been a Magdalen, I had pressed  
Your head against my breast and kept you there—



## STARVED ROCK

But you — my spirit drifts with stricken wings —  
But you because of gossip, crawling words  
About my drinking, lies as I shall prove,  
Can hold a handkerchief upon your eyes  
To hide tumultuous tears, extend your hand  
And say farewell forever, cut our lives  
Of days or months, fragile and trivial  
Asunder — when your hand, your faith, your love  
Had cured me of my spirit's desolation,  
My terror of this solitude in life —  
Or if it cured me not, I had been eased,  
And you had gained for giving — what have you  
For your decision? Sorrow, if you love me,  
Perhaps a conscience whisper that you failed  
In justice, sacrifice; perhaps the thought  
Life with me drinking, to the excess you thought,  
Is better than a life where I am not.  
What have you gained? In a few years we two  
Will be at one with earth — before it comes  
Are not sweet hours together worth the cost  
Of a little drink? You who have riches, need not  
My labors for your bread, but need my love,  
Which you crush out. But as to drink, I swear  
I do not drink."

Ahem! the fellow stirs  
But will not wake, I fear. You heard that last:  
He swears he does not drink. Drink and untruth  
Go always hand in hand. This letter's long —  
Let's see what he comes up with at the last:

## WASHINGTON HOSPITAL

“ But as to drink, I swear I do not drink —  
How if I drank could I produce the works  
I have produced? A giant’s task, when drink  
Sustains me not, is not my nutriment  
As hock and soda water were for Byron,  
But sets me flaming wild, a little drink  
Will set me flaming, poisons me, I know.  
And yet I must partake of drink sometimes  
For life is flying, is recession, we  
Are shrinking back into ourselves, at last  
The arms we shrank from close about us — death’s.  
And there are souls born lonely; I am one.  
And gifted with the glance of looking through  
The shams, the opera bouffe, and I am one.  
Often after a stretch of toil when I  
Come out of the trance of writing spent and wracked,  
I used to walk to High Bridge, sit and muse,  
(For this brain never stops and that’s my curse,)  
Upon this monstrous world and why it is;  
And why the souls who love the beautiful,  
And love it only and are doomed to speak  
Its wonder and its terror are alone,  
Misunderstood and hunted, fouled by falsehood,  
Have crumbs upon the steps, are licked by dogs,  
Or else are starved. And why it is that I  
Must go about, a beggar, with my songs  
Exchanging them for bread. And then it is  
When this poor brain like the creative stuff,  
The central purpose, whirls, as I have written,  
And will not stop — drink! for oblivion,

## STARVED ROCK

For rest, to get away from self, back faster  
From the pursuing Nothing.

Yet, my love,  
Think out what causes judgments, standards, tastes;  
And why it was that Southey, Wordsworth won  
The organic national praise and Shelley lost,  
And Byron lost it — Southey the sycophant,  
Wordsworth the dull adherent, renegade —  
These two against these spirits who came here  
To sing of Liberty — and look at me,  
A wanderer and a poor, rejected man,  
While usurers, slave owners rule the land,  
And the cities reek with hypocrites, who step  
On Freedom and on Beauty, are rewarded,  
Praised, fed and honored for it. Then behold  
Your friend who loves you, hunted, buffeted,  
For a little drink, when in spite of drink and even  
Because of drink, who knows? I have achieved,  
Written these books. And what is life beside,  
Whether with drink or whether with abstinence,  
Except to sing your song and die, what course  
Can stave the event, the wage of life, not sin?  
Oh if you knew what love I have for you!  
All of my powers are not enough to tell  
How all my heart is yours, how I have found  
Eternal things through you, cannot surrender  
Your love, your heart, without I lose some life,  
Some vital part of me — and yet farewell,  
For you have willed it so, and I submit.

## WASHINGTON HOSPITAL

I rise up in my loneliness, seek the sun  
To shine about me in my loneliness,  
Submit and say farewell."

He spoke some words!  
What was it that he said? His head rolls over.  
The man is dead! What was it that he said?  
Something about "no more" it seemed to me.  
Whom shall we notify? Go tell the police!  
Here! wait, I overlooked some writing — yes,  
A name is on this letter — why, look here,  
It's EDGAR ALLAN POE! — I know that name —  
He wrote a poem once about sleigh bells —  
His brow looks whiter, bigger than it did.  
Cover him with a sheet — I'll tell the police!

## NEITHER FAITH NOR BEAUTY CAN REMAIN

Neither faith nor beauty can remain:  
Change is our life from hour to hour,  
Pain follows after pain,  
As ruined flower lies down with ruined flower.

\* \* \* \*

Now you are mine. But in a day to be  
Beyond the seas, in cities strange and new  
To-day will be a memory  
Of a day ephemerally true.

\* \* \* \*

Last night with cheek pressed close to cheek  
Through the brief hours we slept.  
It must be always so, I heard you speak,  
Love found, forever must be kept.

\* \* \* \*

But already we were changed, even as the day  
Invisibly transforms its light.  
We prayed together then for dawn's delay,  
Praying, praying through the night.

\* \* \* \*

Against the change which takes all loveliness,  
The truth our desperate hearts would keep,

## NEITHER FAITH NOR BEAUTY CAN REMAIN

The memory to be, when comfortless,  
Save for the memory we shall yearn for sleep;

\* \* \* \* \*

Against the sinking flame which no more lights  
Our faces, neither any more desired  
Through desireless days and nights,  
And senses fast expiring and expired.

THE END

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